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A FULL NUMBER.

WE offer to our readers this week a full record, so far as that is practicable, of a series of meetings which have been of unusual interest for all those who have the welfare of our Free Churches at heart. It will be seen from the reports of the meetings of the Sunday School Association, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and the Central Postal Mission, that our work is as vigorous as ever, and as well directed. It will be evident to an impartial reader that this manifold activity is the outcome of a genuine religious life—a life not self-satisfied, but striving towards a better future. There is matter in several of the speeches, in the annual sermon, and in the admirable papers which were read, that requires very careful and earnest consideration. We do not pretend here to offer at once any judgment or criticism, but we shall no doubt find during the coming weeks abundant material for the helpful discussion of questions with which we are bound to deal in the interest of a healthy and progressive religious life.

Many of our readers will doubtless turn first to the report of the special meeting of the National Conference. It was to us a matter of regret that the intention of Mr. Wood's amendment had not been more fully explained before the meeting, and we are not sure that after the discussion matters have been altogether made clear. But the decisive vote that was taken points to the wisdom of working from the basis of our present Conference, making it, if desired, more completely representative of our churches, rather than attempting the formation of a new and separate union. The adoption of Mr. STEINTHAL'S resolution gives the Committee of the National Conference continuous existence, and entrusts it with duties and opportunities of service, which, if rightly used, may be the beginning of a development of great value in the life of our churches.

THE WEEK'S MEETINGS.

Among those who were present at one or more of the meetings were:—

Foreign Delegates.—Mr. A. M. Bose, Calcutta; Signor F. Bracciforti, Milan; Rev. James Hocart, Brussels; Mr. B. B. Nagarkar, Bombay.

Country Laymen and Women.—Mr. H. Atkins, Hinckley; Miss Beard, Manchester; Mr. R. Belben, Poole; Mr. H. Blessley, Portsmouth; Lady Bowring, Exeter; Mr. E. Bramley, Sheffield; Mr. C. B. [Caughy, Newtownards; Miss Clephan, Leicester; Mr. G. W. Chitty, Dover; Miss Emily Cooke, Liverpool; Mr. D. Davies, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Mr. John Dendy, Manchester; Mrs. Dowson, Gee Cross; Mr. B. Dowson, Nottingham; Mr. F. R. Dunkerley, Altrincham; Mr. Edwin Ellis, Guildford; Miss Else, Leicester; Miss Helen Evans, Manchester; Mr. T. H. Gordon, B.A., Dukinfield; Mr. J. Graham, Glasgow; Mr. E. C. Harding, Manchester; Mr. Archibald Kenrick, Birmingham; Miss Johnson, Liverpool; Mr. C. W. Jones, Liverpool; Mr. T. Grosvenor Lee, Stourbridge; Mr. Basil Lupton, Leeds; Mr. G. H. Leigh, Swinton; Mr. J. Ellis Mace, Tenterden; Sir P. Manfield, Northampton; Mr. J. S. Mathers, Leeds; Mr. C. W. Mellor, Brighton; Mr. George Miller, Bedford; Mr. G. J. Notcutt, Ipswich; Lady O'Hagan, Burnley; Mr. C. H. Perkins, Swansea; Mr. F. Pinnock, Newport, Isle of Wight; Mr. J. G. Pinnock, Newport, Isle of Wight; Mrs. Cosens Prior, Portsmouth; Mr. F. W. Ruck, Maidstone; Mr. Promotho Ioll Sen, Oxford; Mr. J. W. Slatter, Brighton; Mr. G. Carslake, Thompson, Cardiff; Mr. I. M. Wade, Norwich; Mr. J. C. Warren, Nottingham; Mr. J. Harrop White, Mansfield; Sir R. K. Wilson, Bart., Richmond; Mr. P. J. Worsley, Clifton; Mr. A. W. Worthington, Stourbridge; Mr. S. B. Worthington, Manchester.

London Laymen and Women.—Mrs. Aspland, Mrs. Bartram, Mr. S. Charlesworth, Mr. H. Chatfield Clarke, Mr. P. W. Clayden, Mr. Talford Ely, Mr. Hahne-mann Epps, Mrs. Alfred Lawrence, Mr. David Martineau, Mr. F. Nettlefold, jun., Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., Miss Preston, Mr. J. T. Preston, Miss Pritchard, Mr. Ion Pritchard, Mr. J. F. Schwann, Mr. Russell Scott, Miss J. Durning-Smith, Mr. S. S. Tayler, Mr. Howard Young, L.L.B., Mr. F. W. Turner.

Country Ministers Present.—The Revs. Dendy Agate, B.A., Altrincham; Alfred Amey, Framlingham; E. Solly Anthony, M.A., B.D., Poole; R. A. Armstrong, B.A., Liverpool; Henry Austin, Cirencester; C. D. Badland, M.A., Clifton; Ambrose Bennett, M.A., Chesterfield; A. N. Blatchford, B.A., Bristol; W. Blazeby, B.A., Sheffield; S. S. Brettell, M.A., Crewkerne; T. B. Broadrick, Bridg-

water; W. H. Burgess, B.A., Manchester; S. Burrows, Dover; Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., Oxford; Hubert Clarke, Godalming; B. C. Constable, Stockport; J. Cogan Conway, Ringwood; E. M. Daplyn, Norwich; Rudolf Davis, B.A., Evesham; Peter Dean, Walsall; R. C. Dendy, Sevenoaks; R. B. Drummond, B.A., Edinburgh; W. H. Drummond, B.A., Warrington; T. Dunkerley, Comber; John Ellis, Sheffield; J. A. Fallows, M.A., Guildford; E. I. Fripp, B.A., Belfast; R. H. Fuller, M.A., Halstead; Henry Gow, B.A., Leicester; C. A. Greaves, D.C.L., Canterbury; W. Harrison, Stalybridge; E. J. Harry, Chelmsford; A. Harvie, Byker and Choppington; H. W. Hawkes, Bootle; R. Travers Herford, B.A., Stand; Vernon Herford, B.A., Oxford; Rowland Hill, Bedford; P. M. Higginson, Monton; E. R. Hodges, Newark; A. Hood, Brighton; L. P. Jacks, M.A., Birmingham; W. Jellie, B.A., Ipswich; J. E. Jenkins, Dowlais; E. Ceredig Jones, Bradford; E. J. Jones, M.A., Aberdare; J. F. Kennard, Bury St. Edmunds; L. de Beaumont Klein, D.Sc., Liverpool; Geo. Lansdown, King's Lynn; Walter Lloyd, Gloucester; E. W. Lummis, B.A., Hull; Richard Lyttle, Moneyreia; W. G. Marsden, Blackburn; John Moore, Hindley; Philemon Moore, B.A., Carmarthen; A. E. O'Connor, Moira; G. A. Payne, Knutsford; H. S. Perris, M.A., Mansfield; C. E. Pike, Holywood; S. Gardner Preston, Hastings; G. C. Prior, Portsmouth; H. D. Roberts, Chester; T. Robinson, Swansea; W. R. Shanks, Manchester; A. H. Shelley, Dudley; A. Leslie Smith, B.A., Macclesfield; F. W. Stanley, Bath; S. A. Steinthal, Manchester; W. Stephens, Rotherham; J. C. Street, Shrewsbury; Felix Taylor, Tenterden; Jenkyn Thomas, Aberdare; W. L. Tucker, M.A., Flowery Field; G. Hamilton Vance, B.D., Dublin; E. A. Voysey, B.A., Reading; J. H. Weatherall, B.A., Darlington; C. H. Wellbeloved, Southport; E. J. Wilkins, Wareham; F. Haydn Williams, Whitby; Lewis Williams, Talsarn; H. Williamson, Dundee; Joseph Wood, Birmingham; J. J. Wright, Chowbent.

London Ministers.—Revs. Frederic Allen, W. Copeland Bowie, W. G. Cadman, Geo. Carter, V. D. Davis, B.A., T. E. M. Edwards, A. Farquharson, Silas Farrington, F. K. Freeston, B. Kirkman Gray, James Harwood, B.A., Brooke Herford, D.D., G. Dawes Hicks, Ph.D., F. H. Jones, B.A., L. Jenkins Jones, A. J. Marchant, T. L. Marshall, J. S. Mummery, Ph.D., H. W. Perris, W. Chynoweth Pope, Henry Rawlings, M.A., Harold Rylett, Robert Spears, J. E. Stronge, F. Summers, W. G. Tarrant, B.A., John Toye, J. Warschauer, M.A., P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., S. Fletcher Williams, W. Wooding, M.A.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A SPECIAL MEETING of the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or kindred congregations was held on Tuesday afternoon in Essex Hall, Dr. BLAKE ODGERS, President, in the chair.

The business was to consider the following resolution proposed by the Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL :—

That the Council of the Triennial Conference having been constituted on a basis by which it represents the various congregations and Associations which form the Conference, it is hereby resolved that the Committee be instructed to hold regular meetings to consult and, when considered advisable, to take action in matters affecting the well-being and interests of the congregations and Societies which form the Conference, by directing attention, suggesting plans, organising expressions of opinion, or summoning, if they deem it needful, a special meeting of the Conference. Further, the Committee shall present to each Conference a full report of its proceedings and the action it has taken for the approval or otherwise of the Conference.

The CHAIRMAN said it would be in the recollection of those present that at Sheffield Mr. Steintal proposed a resolution which, after discussion, was adjourned. It was thought desirable that the Committee should consider the resolution, and should make some report to the Conference. The Committee had accordingly met and had considered Mr. Steintal's resolution, and had resolved to recommend this Conference to accept it, and had called the special meeting of the Conference at a time when it was most convenient to the ministers and delegates. There were now two amendments to the resolution. The first was to be proposed by Mr. Wood, which had been printed and circulated amongst the members and delegates, and had appeared in *THE INQUIRER*. The other was a motion by Mr. Williams to omit the last clause from Mr. Steintal's proposition.

The Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL, after having gained permission to alter the word "Council" of the Triennial Conference, to "Committee," said the Conference would remember that at the Manchester meeting a scheme of electing the Committee was proposed whereby that Committee became a real representative Committee of the churches. It followed as a matter of course, it seemed to him to be so at least, that during the interval when the Conference was not in session the Committee should have power, if it deemed necessary, to take up several matters which would naturally come up for discussion at the Conference. It was only right, seeing that the Committee was the only body which represented the churches in the country, that power should be given them which would enable the Committee to call attention to the various subjects that interested all members of their churches. At the present time there was no other body that was able really to do so. There had, no doubt, during past years, been most important suggestions made by the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. As would be remembered, the question was discussed some years ago at the meeting of the Association, and it was decided

that as that Association was upon a doctrinal basis it should not receive delegates from congregations that declined to base their existence on any dogmatic issues. Therefore the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was at present only an association of individuals who had certain views. He was a member of that Association and had not come there in antagonism to that body. It was an Association which had done very good work at a time when there was no one fitted to step in and take up the position of expressing opinions that no other society was able to put before the country in the same way. He was also quite ready to acknowledge the broad and liberal spirit in which the Committee of that Association had managed its affairs, and he did not want in any sense of the word to be considered antagonistic. If he were so, it would not be on that platform that he should make any attack on the management of the Association. It did seem to him that it could not be denied that they had at the present time very important questions before them on which it was important that there should be an expression of opinion from all congregations on matters affecting the people. When the question of the Dissenting Chapels Bill was before the country the B. and F.U.A. felt it could not join in the agitation that was then going on, and the English Presbyterian Association was formed to carry out that work, which, he believed, if the National Conference had been in existence it would have legitimately taken in hand. There were questions that came up which were of different character, bearing on the spiritual life of the congregations, and the religious work that the congregations had in hand, which might be discussed by the Committee in the intervals between the Conferences. There was some fear in the minds of some of the congregations that his proposal was one which wished to give to the Committee or to the Conference some power over the congregations themselves, which would interfere with their internal arrangements. That was not so, for whatever the Conference did, it had no power to interfere with the private arrangement of any congregation. The Committee, he felt, should have power to discuss social questions which affected the congregations, and express some opinion. He had for a long time past been connected with temperance work, and he felt that they should be able to express through their Committee their views upon questions connected with the temperance of the community. There were matters connected with the social question which he felt the Committee would discuss, and protest if necessary, against any attempt at interference. With regard to the amendments which had been sent in by Mr. Wood and Mr. Williams, he did not consider that Mr. Wood's proposal was an amendment in the slightest degree to his proposal. Indeed, if law was to be enforced, it ought to be ruled out of order. Not that he objected so much to the aims and objects of Mr. Wood's amendment, but he believed that it would be rooting-up an institution which had already taken a great hold upon the community, and therefore he was doubtful whether it would be wise to pass a resolution of that kind. Dealing with Mr. Williams' amendment, he had less ob-

jection to it than to that of Mr. Wood; in fact, it was really the original form of his own resolution, but he added that particular clause which Mr. Williams wished to strike out in order to describe the real intention and kind of work the Committee was to do during the interval of the different Conferences. He did not wish it to be understood that he was trying to interfere with the liberty of the congregations as seemed to be the idea in Sheffield. He thought it was well that the Committee should be brought into touch with a constituent body that brought it into existence, and that its action should thereby be approved or disapproved. He then moved the resolution.

Mr. JOHN DENDY seconded the resolution. He believed that by prudent counsels and discussion and a charitable desire to do justice to one another the necessity for a struggle over opposing tendencies in their Church would be averted. The unity which they desired to preserve needed some form of outward expression to render it effective. That the Triennial Conference gave, but it failed in so far as it is lacking in continuity. It was not always ready when occasion required. The resolution aimed at supplying the element of continuity. In the absence of some such body as it was proposed to constitute, it was almost inevitable that many of its proper functions should devolve upon some other body. They need go no farther than that to understand how it was that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association had tended to become a kind of general purposes committee for their churches. It had been forced into a position for which its constitution did not qualify it. He was not in sympathy with the wild attacks that had been made upon the Association, which he thought had tended to injure the cause which they had been intended to serve. He admired the energy and ability of its administration and the broad spirit in which it had interpreted its duties. They must place their organisation, which was not only to express their opinions of to-day, but to affect the thought and life of those who followed them, upon the broadest possible basis.

The Rev. PHILEMON MOORE rose on a point of order, submitting that the meeting was not competent to deal with the amendment by Mr. Wood.

The Rev. JOSEPH WOOD said: To put himself perfectly in order, he had, at the advice of the chairman, decided to preface his amendment with the words: "That the further discussion of the resolution be adjourned, and that in the meantime the Committee of the Conference be, and is," &c. The effect of the amendment, if carried, would be to adjourn that discussion.

The CHAIRMAN explained that when he received the notice of motion from Mr. Wood he was very doubtful whether it was a proper amendment, but it appeared to him that it might be made proper with the addition of a few words. Therefore, he took the opportunity of telling him that he regarded it as out of order.

The Rev. JOSEPH WOOD then moved his amendment, which was as follows :—

That the further discussion of the resolution be adjourned, and that in the meantime the Committee of the Conference be, and is hereby instructed to consult the various Provincial Assemblies, Unions, and District Associations which are constituted on a basis representing

the churches in their various provinces on the following points:—(1) The desirability of uniting such Provincial Assemblies, Unions, and Associations in a National Free Church Assembly by means of delegates duly elected in proportion to the number of churches in each Union, and on the basis of absolute freedom from doctrinal tests. And (2) the objects which such a national assembly should have in view—namely (a) the promotion of fellowship among the churches; (b) the aiding and strengthening of the churches by consultation, suggestion of plans, and, where needed, pecuniary help, and the promotion of missionary work; (c) by taking action, where considered advisable, in matters affecting the welfare and interest of the churches. And the Committee of the Conference is also instructed, in case the majority of replies from the Local Associations should consider it desirable to meet for conference on the above scheme, to call at an early date a meeting of the officials and Committees of all such Associations with a view to future action.

His strongest objection to the resolution proposed by Mr. Steinthal was this, that the Committee to which certain functions were to be entrusted, was to be elected by a body representative of other interests and institutions than the churches. In addition to the churches represented at the Conference, there were sixty-five societies also represented, and nineteen of them were doing work for the Church, such as the Midland Christian Union and the Western Union. They had a perfectly legitimate place in the Conference. There were, however, forty-six societies represented in the Conference, which had no connection with the churches whatever, which did not represent churches. There was the Pargeter Trust. There was also Dr. Williams' Library—an extremely valuable institution so far as London ministers were concerned—but he failed to see what its Trustees had to do directly with the Church. If there was to be a Committee which was going to speak in the name of the churches that Committee must represent the churches and churches alone. In so far as it represented extraneous bodies its force was weakened. If the Committee was to have these functions it seemed to him that the first duty was to see that only direct Church representatives were on the Committee. Would Convocation allow the S.P.C.K. to sit in its midst? Would the Congregational Union allow the Religious Tract Society? Although they were admirable institutions and doing admirable work, yet they were not representative of the churches. He knew it might be said it would be a great misfortune to narrow down the Conference. He agreed so long as it remained a Conference, but if the Conference Committee was to be the voice and the organ of the churches, then it seemed to him that the Conference must be limited to delegates of the Church alone. This amendment did not ask the meeting to do anything that day, because it seemed to him that it would be a great misfortune to hurry the matter through. It simply asked the meeting to refer the whole matter back to the various Unions, Societies, and Assemblies—nineteen in number—which actually represented the churches. This amendment was an extremely cautious and tentative proposal, to be threshed out and criticised in the local Unions, and only to be further considered if its main idea met with their approval. The Unions or their representatives would

have to meet to discuss the ways and means for carrying out this proposal, and therefore the amendment did not commit anyone to the methods or to the principle. The principles of the amendment were twofold. Firstly, that whatever body is constituted it shall be representative of the churches alone. That seemed to him to be the fundamental principle, and absolutely necessary for a Committee, which was to be the voice and organ of the Church. Secondly, that it should proceed upon the line of actual work which was already being done. The foremost function should not be ecclesiastical, but missionary, not church control, but church aid, which were two very different things. He had long had the idea in his mind that it would be a most useful and admirable thing if the local church unions could be got together into a central union, which would strengthen the churches generally. That idea had occurred to him long before any of the present controversies. These were days of combination, and a great deal in this regard could be learnt from the other large denominations. At the meeting of the Congregational Union held a month ago, it was stated that the watchword for the twentieth century must be "concentrate." In the Evangelical Free Church Federation there was an object lesson of the value of co-operation. One object of that task was to recognise the scope and range which was demanded of the Liberal Faith, and to recognise what had not yet been recognised, the wide open door that was standing before the people of the Church which they were called upon to enter. If they were to enter, he was persuaded that they must draw closer together and think of their churches, not as fragments and scraps, but as a whole, a living thing, one inspiring fact. They had wondered and mourned over the weakness of their churches, and had painfully asked the reason. The reasons were manifold. One was their isolation. Alone and solitary they did not know how to bear up against the forces opposed to them. What was needed was the sense of fellowship, the feeling that they were taking part in a large movement bound by chivalry to a high and sacred purpose.

The amendment was seconded by the Rev. W. H. DRUMMOND, of Warrington, who said that he entirely agreed with Mr. Wood's criticism of the composition of the National Conference. There was a very large percentage of representatives of other societies, and their presence made it impossible to give to a committee which did not represent the churches, and the churches only, the power of expressing the common mind of the churches, as Mr. Steinthal proposed. They as a people had been steeped in individualism—in the individualism of fifty years ago, but the whole political and social movement of to-day was toward a more fully-expressed corporate life. Something was needed that would appeal to the spiritual needs and loyalty of their young people. If once they enlarged their basis to that of a common corporate life, year by year they would find that they realised more fully that they were working as a Church and not only as individuals. He seconded the resolution because it was evident that adequate justice could not be done in the course of a two hours' discussion to a matter which might affect the life of the

Church for a whole century. It would be extremely unwise to come to a decision that afternoon. If the resolution were carried it would have the effect of indefinitely postponing that which was so much to be desired—the extension of the corporate life of the Church.

The Rev. HADYN WILLIAMS opposed the amendment.

Mr. A. W. WORTHINGTON said that he would like to be able to understand Mr. Wood's amendment. Did he intend to amend the constitution of the Committee of the Conference, or did he intend to set up a new Committee outside the Conference, or was it his desire to supersede the Conference by a new Association? Was it contended that it was possible to have the Committee representing churches without representing the additional Associations, because numbers of the representatives were already members of the churches, and would have, therefore, a voice in the proposals of the Committee of the Conference. He wanted to know whether, in addition to the Conference and the Unitarian Association, Mr. Wood intended to set up a new Association as a National Free Church Assembly. He had considered the matter, and this seemed to be the only logical conclusion at which one could arrive after thinking over the terms of Mr. Wood's amendment, which he (Mr. Worthington) feared would divide opinion very sharply.

The Rev. PHILEMON MOORE said that he had come there with the intention of opposing Mr. Wood's amendment to the resolution, but he had determined to support it. It seemed to him that the preamble to the amendment entirely altered the complexion of the question, and he thought it would be advisable if Mr. Steinthal's resolution, as well as the amendment, were submitted to the Associations for consideration at one and the same time. He would still have opposed the amendment had it been put on its merits, but if they rejected it they must proceed at once to discuss Mr. Steinthal's resolution, and to deal with it there and then. He considered that the meeting was not competent to discuss such a step as that Mr. Wood proposed. In the absence of definite instructions upon the subject from the congregations that were represented, he trusted that the substance of Mr. Wood's amendment would not be accepted.

Mr. DAVID MARTINEAU opposed the amendment on the ground that it would be the means of establishing a governing body for all the churches throughout England—a thing which hitherto it had been their pride not to possess. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association from its constitution was utterly incapable of taking upon itself this power, but if the amendment were carried as a substantive motion, and such a National Free Church Assembly was appointed, it would be an assembly which would obtain the power to coerce them into having a creed.

The Rev. HENRY GOW, of Leicester, said that it was trivial to charge Mr. Wood with having endeavoured to set up any other body by his amendment. They all knew Mr. Wood's work, and the only effect his amendment could have would be to bring about a closer organisation in the churches. Mr. Wood's character was surely such that everybody must know he did not wish to establish anything in the nature of a new ecclesiastical tyranny,

and he had made it clear enough in his speech that he had no such thing in his mind. It was desirable to look upon the amendment as an attempt to deal on strictly congregational lines with this question, and not to regard it as an attempt to interfere with the life of the congregations. The amendment, in fact, attempted to do what Dr. Martineau had suggested should be done at Leeds.

After some questions as to the effect carrying the amendment would have upon the consideration of the original resolution, the Chairman called on

Dr. BROOKE HERFORD, who said that he had come in the belief that Mr. Wood's amendment was in the nature of a general assault upon the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, but he found that was not so. The real gist of that afternoon's proceedings was that they were being invited to break away from the National Conference. The Conference had done its work well, and they did not want any propositions to put another institution in its place. The only criticism upon it had been as to its name. In the list of its constituents, in addition to some 350 churches, there were some 55 associations, but it would not be difficult to decrease this number to which Mr. Wood objected; some of them had never sent representatives, saying that it was not their business to do so. They did not want another National Assembly, and he hoped the meeting would simply vote down Mr. Wood's amendment.

Mr. WADE could not understand what the Conference had been called for if discussion were to be postponed. In that case the resolution was unnecessary and the amendment superfluous. The delegates had come to discuss and decide, not to adjourn.

The CHAIRMAN then put the amendment to the meeting, and on a show of hands declared it to have been lost.

A division being challenged by a delegate, the amendment was voted upon, the result being that there were for the amendment 65, against 102.

Mr. STEINTHAL'S resolution was then put to the meeting, and after considerable discussion, during which the amendment of the Rev. F. Haydn Williams was dealt with, was agreed to in the following form:—

That the Committee of the Triennial Conference having been constituted on a basis by which it represents the various congregations and Associations which form the Conference, it is hereby resolved that the Committee be instructed to hold regular meetings to consult and, when considered advisable, to take action in matters affecting the well-being and interests of the congregations and Societies which form the Conference, as by directing attention, suggesting plans, organising expressions of opinion, raising funds to carry out the foregoing objects, or summoning, if it deem it needful, a special meeting of the Conference. Further, that the Committee shall present to each Conference a full report of its proceedings and the action it has taken for the approval or otherwise of the Conference.

The proceedings then terminated.

TO CORRESPONDENTS. — Letters, &c., received from W. W. C., A. J., H. S. J., R. J. J., W. M., W. W.

MYTHOLOGY is not religion. It may rather be regarded as the ancient substitute, the poetical counterpart, for dogmatic theology.—*Guesses at Truth.*

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

THE sixty-fourth annual meeting of the Sunday School Association was held on Tuesday evening, at Essex Hall. A reception of delegates, ministers and superintendents by the President and Committee of the Association was first held, and was largely attended. At seven o'clock the chair was taken by the Rev. J. E. CARPENTER, M.A., the President, who in opening the meeting offered a resolution expressive of the sense of bereavement of the whole nation in the death of Mr. Gladstone, and testifying to their sense of the immense services which that heroic statesman had rendered to his age. In no other country could such a demonstration have been witnessed as that of the national mourning of the last week. Chief among the characteristics they should admire in Mr. Gladstone was the heroic determination which led him to devote his years unflinchingly to the public good, and the profound faith which animated him throughout the various changes of a long career. Doubtless, it was true of Mr. Gladstone, as Plutarch said of Pericles, that he never went down to an assembly of the people without the prayer in his heart that he might say nothing unworthy of God. From first to last the faith of Mr. Gladstone was the mainspring of his thought and action. It was true that his faith was conceived in forms which were not their forms; but none the less they could admire and revere him. It was true that he based it on a conception of the Bible which many of the publications of their Association were designed directly or indirectly to counteract. But nevertheless he sympathised sincerely with every genuine effort to make the words of that great treasure-house of religious literature real and potent to every soul. They must look to him with admiration for his noble character, his religious earnestness, his lofty intellectual gifts and his continuous efforts for the welfare of the people. Of him they might say, as his illustrious poet friend said of himself:—

So to the land's
Last limit he came—
And could no longer,
But died rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught him in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovered the Gleam.

Mr. Gladstone was one who from the first hour to the last "followed the Gleam." It was not without significance that at the festival of Whitsuntide they should commemorate his death. There were pentecostal hours in the life of a nation as well as of an individual. And in the wonderful outpouring of admiration, unstinted and genuine from all parties, in the abatement of political rancour, in the deep emotion which had purified and ennobled their public life, he would fain believe their people had had a pentecostal hour, and had received some higher vision of the things of the Spirit. He moved:—

That this meeting records its deep sense of the loss which the nation has sustained in the death of the late Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, expresses its admiration of his noble character, his religious earnestness, his lofty intellectual gifts, and his continuous efforts for the welfare of the people, and desires to convey to Mrs. Gladstone and the members of her family the assurance of their profound sympathy with them in their bereavement.

The resolution was passed in silence, the whole audience rising in their places.

The hymn "O Life that maketh all things new" was then sung, after which the Treasurer's report was presented by Dr. BLAKE ODGERS.

The accounts showed that although £75 had been drawn from the "Read Fund," towards the cost of *The Helper* for 1898, the balance due to the Treasurer was £17 4s. 3d. The sale of publications had realised £942 17s. 11d., and the subscriptions of societies, schools and individuals amounted to £285 5s. 6d. For the printing of books £91 more than last year had been expended, the total being £327 2s. 10d., and £171 19s. 2d. for *Young Days*, with £44 11s. 5d. for illustrations. The total expenses amounted to £1,339 17s. 9d. The "Read Fund" had not only provided for the printing of *The Helper*, but a lantern had been bought for the use of schools, and slides provided to illustrate "The Story of Religion in England." The "Special Grant Fund," amounting to £17 17s. 6d., had been used for the granting of books to ministers and schools, the balance of £7 15s. having been already expended in the present year. Dr. Odgers urged the need of new subscribers to the funds of the Association to replace those removed by death.

Mr. ION PRITCHARD as secretary presented the report of the Committee, pointing out that the Association was not merely a London Society, but that its work was in the service of the whole country. In the publication department, which was their chief work, they had lately followed a new line, and had brought out a number of class books suitable for all ages in their schools, and it only remained for superintendents and teachers to acquaint themselves with these books to secure for them a wide circulation. The statistics they had gathered showed that 281 of their schools kept their books in an orderly manner and were able to make useful returns. In a publication of the Sunday School Union addressed to superintendents, and designed to help them in their duties, he had been struck by one sentence, which he offered for their consideration: "Don't let a young teacher who seems to be over-weighted during the lesson leave the school without a few words of encouragement."

The report noted that the book-room sales had been about the same as for the last five years, but that purchases by schools had fallen off. Copies of Mr. Tranter's paper, "The Sunday-school Scholar and his Difficulties," read at the last Whitsuntide meeting, had been sent to the 3,638 teachers registered in the returns. Attention was called to the falling off in the number of teachers. During the year the publication of *Young Days* had been continued, and the volume of *The Helper* had been brought out and had proved to be of the greatest value to teachers. Other publications were "Half Hours with the Parables," by the Rev. J. C. Hirst; "Do the Right," by A. L. C., and "Successful Life," by Mr. John Dendy, books which in the most admirable manner met the needs of children of different ages. A volume of *The Helper* for 1899 was in preparation, and also a little volume on "The Books of the Bible," by the Rev. J. H. Weatherall; "Ethics in Relation to Religion," by the Rev. C. B. Upton; and "Hymns and their Writers," by the Rev. V. D. Davis. The first series of slides to illustrate Dr. Herford's "Story of Religion in England" was ready, with a selec-

tion of readings to go with them. The travelling sample boxes of books had been in constant use throughout the year.

The CHAIRMAN, in moving the adoption of the report, spoke of the great value of the publications of the year, and of the interest of the forthcoming volumes. The small but continuous leakage in the schools must be noted. They had twelve more schools, but 300 less scholars and 81 fewer teachers. There were various causes for this. Changes in belief rendered it sometimes difficult to undertake religious teaching, and the great variety of philanthropies which engaged their young people during the week made them less ready to give up their Sunday leisure. And then there was the bicycle. Ministers must take warmly to heart the needs of the schools, and urgently invite and press on the young people the duty of joining in that work. He had found in Manchester College that the most successful students were those who had previously been successful teachers. He would ask the teachers also to interest themselves in the matter, and bring in their brothers and sisters and friends, and invite them to take part in the work. The future of the churches lay with the young people. Unless they made the schools a nursery of the Church they would find their place in the kingdom of God was not filled, they would not have rendered the service to which they were called, their allegiance to truth and love, to Jesus and to God would remain unfulfilled.

The Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG seconded the motion, and offered his congratulations on what he regarded as the best set of publications issued by the Association in any single year. He referred particularly to Mr. Dendy's "Successful Life," and that beautiful little book "Do the Right." In *The Helper* there was a marvellous variety of helpfulness and a great range of interest. Books for teachers often discouraged rather than helped, because they set too distant an ideal before the teacher. But their *Helper* struck just the right note, and he rejoiced to hear that there was to be a second issue. Of the Association, in which many of them had been deeply interested for many years, they might say, adopting the words of the motto card for the year, "She hath done what she could." The Association had had its difficulties, limitations of funds, and had been looked upon coldly and askance by a large part of the Christian world; but year after year it had brought out a series of books not to be surpassed in value by the publications of any similar society. It was work of which they might well be proud.

The resolution having been carried, the Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS moved:—

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the officers and Committee of the Association for their services during the past year, and that the respective appointments for the coming year be as follows:—President: John Dendy, Esq. (Manchester). Vice-Presidents: Frederick Nettlefold, Esq., I. M. Wade, Esq., Rev. James Drummond, M.A., LL.D., C. Fellows Pearson, Esq., Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A. Treasurer: Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., LL.D. Hon. Sec.: Mr. Ion Pritchard. Committee: Mrs. Farrington, Miss Marian Pritchard, Rev. Frederic Allen, Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Rev. W. G. Cadman, Mr. Leslie C. Clarke, Rev. Frank K. Freeston, Rev. F. H. Jones, B.A., Mr. C. F. Pearson, Mr. W. S. Taylor. Together with a delegate from each of the following Local Sunday School Societies,

who are entitled to appoint representatives under rules 4 and 8:—The Bolton District Sunday School Union, the London Sunday School Society, the Manchester District Sunday School Association, the North Midland Sunday School Association, the Yorkshire Sunday School Union. Auditors: Howard Young, Esq., LL.B., A. H. Biggs, Esq., M.A., LL.M.

The Rev. A. N. BLATCHFORD in seconding, added a word as to the falling off in the number of their teachers. In that matter they must be very patient and very considerate. The greater number of their teachers came from a very hard-working class, and they could not be sufficiently honoured. They were the back-bone of their congregational work, their temperance and mutual improvement work. To join them in the spirit of their work he found the best inspiration. He did not look on the bicycle with any ill feeling. There would always be ebb and flow in their numbers, but they might thank God and take courage. The very goodness of the work would be the warrant of its success in the future.

The CHAIRMAN then moved:—

That the hearty welcome of this meeting be given to the following representatives of affiliated and kindred societies:—Irish Non-Subscribing S. S. Association, Rev. C. E. Pike; Scottish Sunday Schools, Rev. H. Williamson; Welsh Sunday Schools, Rev. Philemon Moore, B.A.; Bolton District S. S. Union, Rev. J. J. Wright; Liverpool Sunday School Society, Miss Maughan; London Sunday School Society, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A.; Manchester District S. S. Association, Mr. George H. Leigh; Midland S. S. Association, Mrs. Wright; North Cheshire S. S. Union, Rev. W. Harrison; North Midland S. S. Association, Rev. J. Birks; South Cheshire S. S. Union, Rev. George A. Payne; South Eastern S. S. Union, Rev. T. E. M. Edwards; Western Sunday School Union, Rev. H. Shaen Solly, M.A.; Yorkshire Sunday School Union, Mrs. Rawlings.

The Rev. F. H. JONES supporting the resolution said that some of the district societies were qualified to appoint delegates to take part in the work of the Association, and it was very desirable that they should have representatives from all parts of the country on the Committee. The various Associations should qualify under Rules 4 and 8, and then appoint as their delegate someone acquainted with the schools of their district who was resident in London, and so could attend the regular meetings of the Committee.

The Rev. CLEMENT E. PIKE responded to the resolution, and the Chairman then called upon Miss A. J. LAWRENCE to read the paper of the evening:—

CLASS ORGANISATION AND THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF THE TEACHER.

The aim of Sunday-school work being to bring to bear upon the minds of the young certain uplifting influences, a very serious duty devolves upon those who endeavour to assist the workers engaged upon such an important task.

What are these influences? And how may they best find expression in our schools?

The influences which we see at work in the Sunday-school are generally of two kinds: that which results from the devoted attachment formed by a scholar for his teacher, who stands to him as his highest moral and religious ideal; and that which results from an unconscious absorption of all the good habits, true thoughts and high associations connected with the school itself.

At first sight it appears as if these different influences contended one against the other. In organising a school we feel obliged, to a certain extent, to sacrifice the personal influence of the teacher in order to obtain well-ordered

classes and definite teaching. Frequent discussions have arisen as to the relative value of each. "Shall we," it is asked, "confine our attention principally to the discipline, routine, and teaching of the school? or are we to consider Sunday-school work one of an entirely different kind, and lay most stress on the personal work of the teacher?"

It is evident that each is as necessary as the other, and by careful study I believe it is possible to find the means whereby these seemingly contending influences may not only cease to act against each other, but may be made to work for one another. And in this way we shall obtain that larger and better influence over the lives of the scholars which we all have so much at heart.

In the organising of classes in a Sunday-school the difficulty generally arises with the question of promotion.

It is most desirable that among the younger children there should be some regular system of gradually moving up at certain ages into fixed classes. The scholar should be encouraged by the idea of rising from the bottom to the top of the school. If we do not adopt some system we are liable to get irregular-sized classes of no particular age, with a tendency to attend only when their special teacher is present, and to lose interest altogether when the teacher leaves the neighbourhood. The children should love not only their own teacher, but the school with all the workers. On the other hand, by causing the children to change their class we are liable to destroy the growing influence of the teacher. The frequent partings from scholars (with whom sincere attachments had been formed) causes dissatisfaction, terrible heart-burnings sometimes; there is the weariness of beginning the teaching all over again; perhaps the rebellion of the scholars at coming under a new influence.

There are several ways, however, by which we can prevent the system of promotion from coming into contact with and destroying the personal influence of the teacher.

1.—By the promotion of teachers. Sometimes teachers and scholars may be promoted together. This is not mere form. As the scholars grow older they should take a higher place, and in a growing school the increase is among the little ones, and those sent up from the infant class may be given to new teachers. But teachers should also be promoted independently of their classes. They, as well as the scholars, grow older and learn by experience. When a teacher has been in the school some time, if he has moderate ability, it is generally expedient to place him with a higher class. Good teaching is needed for all classes, but especially among the elder ones, and good material is wasted if experienced teachers are kept to the junior classes. By these means a teacher knows a larger number of scholars personally, he has a chance of meeting his old scholars again, and the interest of the whole school becomes his interest.

This method is of great importance in getting new teachers. It is not a difficult matter to procure the help of some young recruit to take a class of young children, whereas good teachers for elder classes are rare. They should be trained in the school. The young people in the congregation should be brought in when they have just left boarding-school, given a young class, interested in the work, and the result will generally be that they will be in time capable of taking elder scholars. (True when the superintendent has this power of thus shifting the teachers in the school he sometimes finds it necessary to ask a teacher to take a lower class. This need not give offence, if done with tact, and real sympathy be shown with the teacher who is struggling with an especially troublesome class.)

2.—After the age of fifteen or sixteen or so the scholars should not, unless in exceptional cases, be asked to change their teacher. As soon as they reach this age they should become, with their teacher, a subdivision of the first class. In this way it is possible for the children to pass up regularly through the school, and yet at the same time to be, if required, a great part of their school life

with one teacher. It also forms an incentive to the teacher to know that, if he really can win the affection of his scholars, there will be a possibility of his at last remaining permanently with them.

Then with regard to the actual teaching. In a Sunday-school there should be some regular teaching, religious, moral, and historical. After several years of attendance at a Sunday-school it is reasonable to expect that when a scholar leaves he should have some fixed ideas of religion, some sound moral thoughts and a certain knowledge of the Bible. This should be the aim of all the workers, and the authorities are justified in maintaining that there should be some measures taken to ensure that the classes are being taught definitely on these points.

But here, again, the question arises whether by thus dictating the subject to the teacher, and perhaps even prescribing the limit of time given to each subject, we do not detract from that spontaneous teaching which is, after all, the ideal of Sunday-school work—the teacher speaking as a friend, almost, I should say, as a father or a mother, to the scholars about the deepest things of life.

This is a difficult question and requires careful working out. The requirements may be different in different localities where circumstances may be substantially different. One method is to adopt periodical courses of instruction. As a general rule the teacher should be left to choose his own subject and follow his own manner of teaching. But now and again some special course of study may be chosen, the minister or some other competent person is asked to prepare certain lessons, and the teachers are invited to attend preparatory classes. The whole school or those of an age for which the course is suitable are trained on that subject. The advantages of this suggestion are that the teachers will be found ready to attend preparatory classes for a definite period, say for two, three, or four weeks, when they would be luke-warm if expected to attend every week in the year. New styles of teaching may thus be introduced. This latter is very important. Children tire quite as much of the style of the lesson as of the subject taught. By these periodical courses infinite variety not only of subject but of style may be introduced, and surely no teacher would consider himself above being thus given ideas as to new forms of teaching. In this way the teacher does not always come to his class with some fixed lesson given him, which must be drilled into the minds of his scholars, but has the opportunity at other times of using at his will any chance event of the week which may have seemed to him to possess a meaning which may be brought home to his class. These two influences, then, need not stand opposed to each other. Rather it is possible for them to work one upon another for their own mutual benefit.

A good teacher recognises the fact that an orderly, well-managed school gives him a much better ground to work upon than a disorderly one, and he will therefore be anxious to make the scholars attend carefully to the rules of the school. There are teachers, we all know, who talk when an order for silence has been given. Good teachers, on the contrary, endeavour to enforce upon their scholars the necessity for obedience. If announcements are given from the platform they repeat them to the children in class; they know that the life of the school consists in the success of these small things. When the children are heard to say: "In my school we do not have such disorder," "In my school we give to the mission," then there has been aroused that spirit of loyalty to the school which helps to make the children carry its influence with them through their lives. And this influence can be best fostered by the personal influence of the teacher.

So far we have spoken of the framework, the channels through which these influences may be carried in order to forward our aim of uplifting the mind of the child. Let us carefully adjust our framework, for the spirit which is to be carried by their means is no light or trivial matter. Sunday-schools are the means

whereby these elevating influences may be set to work.

The spirit which prompts Sunday-schools is a mighty one—a true spirit. We have the high aim of taking the minds of these children among us, who are incapacitated by their surroundings from coming into touch with the highest things of life, and by means of our schools bringing them into touch with them again. In the minds of the children there is the craving, as in every mind, for something wider, truer, more beautiful than the things which we see around us. In some embryo strong characters it becomes such a strong force that nothing can quell it. Thrust these aspiring souls into the dingy streets and daily drudgery and the spirit is restless and untamed. Excitement or some deadening influence is sought to stifle this pressing force, which, seeking after Divine realities, is given earthly limitations.

Whatever we do for the scholar we should bear this in mind. If it is a singing class, let us not be content unless we are teaching them to sing in such perfection and with such enthusiasm that their whole spirit enters into the music, and they are conscious in a degree of the possibilities of the joys of harmony. Is it a drill class, let them use their muscles with such energy that their whole idea of how to work is strengthened and improved. Is it a reading circle, let them so interest themselves in the character or the knowledge before them that the whole world shall grow nobler and grander to them. Is it a religious lesson, let it be made so vivid that the very soul of the child is drawn into admiration and interest, and so are opened the very fountains of praise and reverence.

In order so to teach and train them in this way we must bring to them the best that is in ourselves. This is why Sunday-school teaching is different from all other work, because, however trained and educated a teacher may be, however well organised the classes may be, unless the teacher bring to the class his highest self he is not carrying out the aim of Sunday-school work. To find out the best that is in the child, to train it and influence it, this work needs all the help that we can secure for it—a well-organised school, good teaching, scope for the individual teacher, but above all there needs to breathe through us that Divine Spirit—that spirit which yearns with an undying love towards the children whom it would raise and purify till they become true children of the kingdom.

The Rev. ARTHUR HARVIE opened the discussion, and expressed accord with the greater part of the paper, and especially entire and hearty sympathy with the concluding sentiments. He wished that they might be placed before every one of their teachers up and down the land, to impress more deeply upon them the great responsibility of their task. As to the difficulty of the promotion of scholars, he did not think the suggested remedy of promoting teachers with their classes a good one. It deprived the children of the advantage of gaining new knowledge from new teachers, and was contrary to their best interest. Variety in teaching was good for the children, and to prevent such change would have a bad effect on the education of the teacher as well as of the children. Teachers gained education in the school, and it was better for them to come into contact, not with one class only, but as far as possible with all the children. The youngest classes might need to keep with their teacher, but afterwards children should be moved up through the school in regular succession. The view was shared by many that the infant class was the most difficult in the school, and needed the most experienced teacher. In large schools classification should be by age, and age alone; that was essential for discipline. And if the children understood from the first that regular removal was the rule,

under a skilful superintendent, there would be a minimum of friction.

The Rev. W. HARRISON said they must remember that advice good for one school might not be suitable for others in other parts of the country. In the North, if they left their teachers to choose their own subjects, they would, many of them, be quite at sea. They therefore followed the plan of taking the Manchester district examination syllabus, and selected books from that, recommending them to teachers. Teachers working all the week in factories needed some such suggestion, though with more educated teachers it might be best to leave them to choose subjects in which they took the deepest interest, or found the children interested in. He further recommended the examination scheme, as proved to be very helpful to the quality of teaching and the discipline of schools.

Mr. I. M. WADE urged that all the forces of their congregations should be bent on the successful achievement of that work. The Sunday-school was the most healthy, active, and successful branch of their work; nothing else their churches did was of so great service to the community. They should see to it that the young people brought up in their schools received definite instruction, and were helped to real convictions in religion, that they might know where they stood as Unitarians, and the difference between their beliefs and the popular theology, and might be bound in loyalty to their churches.

Miss PRITCHARD said that as regards the question of a teacher keeping to one class, or passing up the school with the same children, she thought that at times each method was best, but on the whole it was best that teachers should keep to a special class. A teacher with a perfect genius for the infant class might not be so successful with elder children, and others might have a genius for the elder class. It had been said that the smaller classes just above the infants did not require such experienced teachers; but the class of little boys from nine to eleven was in her opinion, the most difficult of all. They did not necessarily need an old teacher, sometimes a young one was better; but they needed someone with dramatic force in sympathy with their fresh young lives. It was too much to expect children to love their school as they did the teacher under whose personal influence they came. With the lads they often found that they were better when they passed to another teacher. The superintendent should be on the look-out to eliminate from a class any spirit that did not seem to fit into it. A timely removal was often a sure remedy.

The Rev. J. J. WRIGHT said that in listening to such papers they must remember that each was a transcript from life, as it was known to the reader. Last year Mr. Tranter had given them his transcript, from which some had differed in opinion; that evening Miss Lawrence had given them hers. What might be right for one particular phase of life might not be applicable to another. It seemed to be assumed in Miss Lawrence's paper that children objected to be promoted away from the teacher to whom they were attached. But in the North they found, as a rule, the children looked forward to promotion from class to class. They, of course, grew fond of a teacher, but they were hopeful and expected to grow fond of the next. It was a good

thing to pass up from one teacher to another, thus receiving the different personal influences, which touched different sides of their inner nature. There were three things at work in their schools, to which Miss Lawrence had very beautifully referred—the personal influence of the teacher, the good surroundings (or the reverse) of the school, and the definite teaching of one kind or another. There ought to be systematic teaching, with the aim of attaching children to the congregations. There was one thing underlying all changes that might come in their school methods, which had been their aim from the beginning and must be to the end—the uplifting of the young soul by the action of the soul of the teacher.

Mrs. JOHN DENDY expressed her great interest in the paper, and said that in her experience as a teacher, trying to give a class of young women of her best, her guide had simply been that what she had found intensely interesting herself, whether a question of politics or poetry or some biblical question, that she could best teach.

The CHAIRMAN in bringing the discussion to a close described a large school in the North, in which members of different denominations, including Unitarians, had joined, and worked together with great success, each teacher retaining the same class and passing up the school with it. That might not always be the best plan, but in that instance it worked admirably.

Miss LAWRENCE having briefly responded, Mr. I. M. WADE moved, and Mr. G. H. LEIGH seconded, the following resolution:—

That this meeting offers its best thanks to Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter for presiding, to Miss Lawrence for her paper, and to all who have contributed to the usefulness and success of the meeting.

This concluded a very successful meeting.

In the *Co-operative News*, of May 28, Mr. G. J. Holyoake writes the following note:—"It was my intention, some time ago, to mention that of the sermons and essays of the late Rev. T. P. Broadbent, B.A., which were published by his father, there remains a small number of the handsome little volume at 4s., to be had of Williams and Norgate, or of his father, Oriel House, The Wallands, Lewes. Mr. Theodore Parker Broadbent, readers will remember, was the first co-operative student who won the Hughes Scholarship. The Rev. Professor Estlin Carpenter furnishes a prefatory note to the book, which records that the Dean of Oriel considered the young student to have not only capacity, but originality. Considering that he was the first co-operative scholar, this volume would be a distinction in any store library. His father, a man of ardent intelligence himself, gave him the name of Theodore Parker. It was very appropriate, if not prophetic, for the young divine proved to have many of the qualities of the famous Boston preacher. I have watched the first efforts of many young pulpiteres, but have known none more remarkable than the author of this volume of sermons. The first sermons of the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke might have had similar qualities. The purity of style, the distinctiveness of thought and elevation of tone, are not common in sermons, and very notable in one so young."

BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

ANNUAL SERVICE.

On Wednesday morning the annual service was held at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, where a large congregation assembled. The preacher was the Rev. L. de Beaumont Klein, D.Sc. (Renshaw-street, Liverpool) who also conducted the service. The singing, led by a voluntary choir from several of the London congregations, was hearty and devout, and the sermon, which we give below, was listened to with close attention. At the close of the sermon a collection was taken, the amount raised being £37 ls. 10d. Miss Tayler presided at the organ.

SERMON.

RELIGION AND THE SERVICE OF TRUTH.

"Ye are all sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness."—1 Thess. v. 5.

This noble utterance of the Apostle Paul expresses the striking contrast between that which religion had meant in the past for his Thessalonian converts, and what it had become for them in the light of Christian ideals. The pilgrims of the night were now the "sons of the day"; from the service of the gods, with its dark, mysterious rites, they had come to the worship of Him in whom "is no darkness at all." For us, the children of another age, and the heirs of generations fashioned, however slowly and imperfectly, under the influence of Christian thought, it must be difficult to realise all the fervid religious enthusiasm to which these words directly appealed. We can hardly estimate their full meaning to men who, like the Thessalonian disciples, could institute a personal comparison between the purity, the spiritual simplicity and the glorious freedom of their new faith, and the degrading superstitions, the material views of life, and the moral slavery in which so many of them had been brought up. They saw their own kinsmen, their dearest friends, still held captive in the bonds they had thrown off, and, measuring the darkness of the night by the intensity of the light received, they felt renewed, born again, as it were, in the glory of that light; they loved to proclaim themselves in the face of a world still believing in the night, the "sons of the day." And light and day were for them no mere metaphors; they signified a spirit and a life, bringing to human souls the very spirit and life of God.

Such profound contrast, such triumphant enthusiasm, we may not, in these days, be able to feel absolutely as the early Christians did, but nevertheless, Paul's words are not without a relative meaning, at least, to us. Some of us can, perhaps, remember days when their religious ideas, if compared with those which inspire them to-day, were more like darkness than light. Or, when we consider the free, modern spirit which is asserting itself in our midst over the slavery to tradition, and the spirit of compromise, can we fail to see the force of the Pauline metaphor of the night and the day, the darkness and the light? Much yet remains awaiting the light, many shadows have yet to be dispelled; nevertheless, in

the name, not so much of what we are, as of what we long to be, and mean to be, may we not, without presumption, take up the Apostle's words, and say with him: "We are not of the night nor of darkness; we are the sons of the day?"

These words were, of course, in the mind of Paul, the expression of a distinct religious attitude, for they had a direct reference to the Christian view of God and man. As the context clearly shows, they had reference to religion conceived as the highest expression of truth. For Paul, as for Jesus, religion and truth were inseparably blended, as light is one with the glowing substance which emits it, as form is one with the body by which it is exhibited. Between our sense of religion and our view of truth, at any given moment, we may, indeed, institute distinctions of reason, as philosophers say, but no distinctions *in re*.

As the comparative study of Religions shows us more clearly every day, it has always been so with human beliefs. Man's views of divine things, of worship, of moral duty, are always found ultimately to rest upon notions more or less true, more or less clear, of the objective reality of certain facts in nature and life. As men see, so they worship. Hence the American poet, James Russell Lowell, could write that great line:—

"Each age must worship its own thought of God."

This brings us to the all-important question:—What place has objective truth—truth, that is, as we are able to see it—in the practical religion of our daily life? Is it something essential to it, or something merely external? Does it afford a necessary foundation, or does it merely confer additional interest? As we have said, Paul gives on this point no uncertain sound. By light, he meant the light of truth, and by truth, the truth of facts. Writing to the Ephesians, he insists on the necessity of speaking the *truth* in love; to the Corinthians he earnestly recommends to approve themselves by the word of *truth*; to the Galatians he affirms the *truth* of his gospel. He cannot conceive a religion of which love is not the practical outcome, but neither can he conceive one that has not the highest truth we have reached as its foundation. On this supreme question, our revered teacher, Dr. Martineau, has profoundly said:—

"In the soul of religion, the apprehension of truth and the enthusiasm of devotion inseparably blend, and in proportion as either is deserted by the other, the conditions of right judgment fail." And he adds: "It is our artificial analysis that separates the two and insists on calling the intellectual side of the fact a *theology*, the affectional a *religion*; . . . we are tempted to think of each as possibly existing without the other, and so to look around us for a religion that may sit apart from all theology."

These weighty words cannot be too often quoted, for they warn us against a tendency fraught with danger to our own religious position—a tendency which, strange to say, manifests itself at opposite poles of religious thought. Some of the most conservative of ecclesiastical systems would reserve all theological speculation to their clergy and concentrate the deposit of divine truth in the hands of authority, at the same time advising the flocks to practise intellectual humility, to trust the

Church and to be content with the safe practice of the Christian virtues under proper direction. On the other hand, we see men professing a thirst for the most absolute religious freedom, and to whom every name or appellation capable of any definite meaning appears as the symbol of intolerable bondage, who would distinguish between truth and devotion, as between religion and theology, and banish from their "Free" Churches whatever can be suspected of conveying any positive interpretation of facts.

But, fortunately for the cause of religious progress, such a scheme is not practicable.

In order to attain their object, they must first succeed in persuading men, either that no truth is attainable, or that there is no such thing as truth; that Pilate's question remains now and for ever unanswered and unanswerable. Secondly, they must persuade men that, in spite of such despair, something called religion yet remains a thing not altogether meaningless. They must show that in the absence of any affirmative conclusion respecting God, we can still enjoy the sense of communion with God, the sense of His fatherly love for us calling forth our love to Him; that under such conditions, prayer can still be a helpful and a reasonable act; that apart from any definite human psychology we can still speak soundly of spirituality, of repentance, of freedom.

Yes, in presence of some of the grim facts of life they must persuade men, the men of our times, that religion remains a reality when you have stripped it of all stated relation to external facts. They must make such a religion a power for purity, unselfishness, and permanent aims apart from any interpretation of scientific facts and moral phenomena calculated to guarantee some reasonable hope, and to turn the scales in favour of an optimistic ideal.

People who little realise the religious feelings developed under forms of faith different from their own, may entertain the illusion that, if only they could open a church founded on the most general principles, men and women would flock to it from all quarters, because nothing would be uttered there in sermons or represented in worship to which anyone could possibly have an intellectual objection.

But practical facts warrant another conclusion. We find that people will object to a particular place of worship, not only because you give them a doctrine they dislike, but quite as much also because you do not give them the doctrine they like. And this means that you may show yourself "theological" quite as much by what you do not say as by what you actually do say. Only people who have long despaired of all truth, or whose minds are affected by religious indifferentism will be thankful to you for the colourlessness of your attitude, but, unfortunately, those are the people who are not much given to church-going.

However, the majority of men and women amongst us are not so constituted. Brought up, most of them, under certain religious influences, they still remain more or less under their sway. Some cling to an undefined reverence for the Bible, while feeling that many things in it scarcely respond to their idea of God's justice and goodness, and that not a few passages seem actually opposed to present knowledge. They are often attracted to our

churches precisely because we profess to deal reverently, but nevertheless rationally, with the difficulties of the Bible. Are we to forbid ourselves all attempts to help them, lest more orthodox believers should dislike our "theological" preaching and stay away?

Some cling to a sense of profound reverence and love for the character and person of Jesus, but have lost their former faith in the orthodox teaching concerning his essential relation to his heavenly Father and ours. They say, perhaps: if Paul could write "To us there is but one God, the Father," how can any Being, however exalted, be considered equal to the Father and share in His Godhead? And they come hoping to hear at last a solution of the solemn enigma. Have we no word for them, no advice, except that they should learn the art of resting comfortably on the horns of a hopeless dilemma?

Some cannot reconcile law and miracle. Shall we tell them that modern knowledge contributes nothing towards the elucidation of that minor point?

Some refuse to believe in the fall of man. Shall we tell them that our view of man remains just the same whether we follow Calvin or whether we accept the verdict of modern anthropology on this question?

Some have difficulties as to a future life. Shall we merely refer them to the "permanent elements" in religion?

Some cannot understand a personal God, and only acknowledge some blind, eternal energy purposelessly working out "the purpose of the ages." Shall we, with a calm, confident air, merely reply, "Let us pray?"

No! the more I consider this matter, the more I feel the hopelessness of attracting men to the worship of God and the unselfish service of man simply by ignoring the difficulties which are forced upon their intellects and their hearts by the facts of life. Men in these days will not be brought permanently to what you call God, to what you call duty, morality, spiritual religion, unless you rest your claims on something more substantial than a vague emotional religiousness without some rational backbone to support it. Such a backbone has been supplied in the past by creeds and definitions supposed to formulate absolute truth, and issued in the name of a living authority or of an ancient book, and although accepted to-day with a faith somewhat less docile and less blind, it still does duty in the world as a religious foundation for millions of men. But such a foundation is apt to become also a burden, and if you reject this burden, which neither you nor your fathers have been able to bear, then another rational foundation must be supplied, if you wish to appeal to your generation with any hope of success. You must embody in your religious message the highest, the most positive truth you know to-day, if you are to be seriously listened to. Let us see, then, that under the specious pretext of universal comprehensiveness, we are not found divorcing religion from the service of truth, lest we cease to be, as Paul would have us be, "Sons of the light and sons of the day."

Religion is so high and sacred a thing in the life of man, not because it may satisfy certain sentimental tendencies, not because it may lull our conscience to sleep, or afford some consolation in solemn and painful moments, but, first and foremost,

because it brings us, with all that is highest and noblest within us, to the conscious service of truth interpreted by love. Tell men that in thus worshipping God, in loving Him, in loving their neighbour, they are not fulfilling the highest realities of life in the light of the clearest truths their present vision can embrace, and you will instantly destroy the religious sense in them. It is the simple, absolute faith in this meaning of religion which gives nobility and power to the religious service even of the most ignorant and superstitious worshipper. He often is intolerant in his ignorance and superstition, precisely because he exaggerates the sum of truth represented by his creed. But, nevertheless, he is, in the sight of God, worthy and honourable in proportion to his faithfulness to what he believes to be true.

The relation of these remarks to the occasion which gathers us here to-day is sufficiently obvious. We are met to inaugurate in a religious spirit the annual meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, a society of men and women united, not by the fetters of unchangeable creeds, but by the natural bond of common aims and principles.

Those principles are designated by the world at large, even more than by ourselves, as "Unitarian." In fact, people seem to insist on giving them that name, while professing at the same time to experience considerable difficulty in finding out what those same principles are!

It would be scarcely right to say that we are indifferent to the noble and pure memories which the Unitarian name appropriately recalls, but I think I can say with perfect accuracy that the members of this Association care infinitely more for the principles they hold than for the name by which they are known.

The name might cease to be used, perhaps will cease one day to be used, but it is our conviction that the principles at present associated with the Unitarian name can never cease to occupy a place in human thought, because they represent abiding realities essentially related to the progress, intellectual and moral, of humanity. They are not, like so many dogmatic definitions, destined to be replaced, as time advances; but it will be with them as with the great principle of Evolution. Higher and more exact applications of that law will certainly appear in science as our knowledge becomes enlarged; already we have a Darwinism since Darwin; but the fundamental principle of evolution remains, even as the sublime order of Nature remains of which that principle is the scientific expression. And it is probably right to say that the evolution theory will remain in the future still connected, not unfairly, with the name of Darwin, even when the scientific interpretations of the law of evolution shall have long ceased to represent the exact point of view reached in Darwin's time. In the same way may we not say that the principles for which we stand to-day have, and probably are destined in the future also to have, a similar relation to the Unitarian name? They may still be known as "Unitarian" principles even when they have given rise to thoughts and doctrines as far removed from the thoughts and doctrines of to-day, as these are at present removed from some of the religious conceptions of a Servetus, a Socinus, a Lindsey, a Priestley, or a Channing.

Thus it frequently happens that our languages, instead of undergoing the laborious process of creating a new word, simply endow an old one with a wider and more general meaning.

However, even when our religious thoughts have travelled thus far under the influence of our principles, even then the Unitarian name will not be applied, I venture to say, altogether wrongly—if it continues to be applied—to them, but will recall an historical filiation as undoubted as it is honourable.

Nevertheless some earnest people, failing to distinguish between universal principles and transitory, denominational views, would wish you hastily to discard the Unitarian name. It would, perhaps, be more to the point first to consider whether people will cease to call us Unitarians, because we affect to reject that name ourselves. It seems to me certain that, even if we should never make a single Unitarian affirmation under that name, so long as we stand openly for the principles which underlie the teachings of a Priestley, of a Channing, and of a Martineau, the world will continue to call us Unitarians.

Some find fault with you because in helping those churches which desire your help you are naturally anxious to promote thereby the diffusion of your religious principles. Of course, you ask no questions as to particular doctrines, you do not insist that a church shall be specifically called Unitarian, you only ask for some assurance that what is much dearer to you than any name shall inspire the religious thought and worship of that church.

But surely a society which has no particular object in view has no reason for its existence. To blame you because you have a work in life and try to do it, seems most unreasonable.

People might as well criticise the Geological Society because it does not give its gold medal to physiologists—at least under ordinary circumstances; or the Palestine Exploration Fund because it does not help workers in need of subsidies for the study of sea-weeds or of Peruvian pottery. Are your funds, then, to be available for people who teach the verbal inspiration of Scripture and the consoling doctrine of everlasting punishment, as well as for people who teach the very opposite? Surely, to support neither side, in the state of mind which such an attitude would presuppose, would be infinitely more rational. The question of our text confronts us again here: "Are we of the darkness or of the light?"

As a matter of fact, even if you were to forget so far your own principles, as a society, as to help places of worship to stand for nothing in particular, you would not thereby help them to any great extent. They might call themselves free, they might call themselves Christian, but this will not attract congregations—at any rate permanently—for, as we have said, people will be kept away quite as much by what is not preached as by that which is preached.

People will say, You are free? Free to teach what? You are Christians? In what sense? If you answer that you hold the Christianity of Christ people are sure to say: this is indeed what we want, but you must tell us what it is. And then, remember, outside Christian countries, even the beautiful Christian name loses

the universal meaning we attach to it and assumes a denominational ring. In India, for instance, you would have to give long explanations before the Christian name could be generally understood to mean there what it means for you here. Try as you may, in your religious message you cannot eschew all forms of verbal definition. The human intellect demands one, and common honesty expects one also. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, we must indeed speak the truth in love, but we can never effectually preach love independently of all truth.

We must come forward with plain, unequivocal religious affirmations in the light of the best we know, while humbly and openly acknowledging that even the greatest of our affirmations may be but stepping-stones to greater ones.

We must welcome all who sincerely desire to worship with us in a spirit of brotherly love, not, however, seeking to attract men by the silencing of our convictions, but rather by the charity with which we state them. We must not aim at the ignoble comprehensiveness that works by compromise, but rather cultivate an earnest, honest spirit sustained by high thoughts and pure ideals under the strain of contradiction and isolation. In a word, as faithful sons of the day, we must strive, with reasonable freedom, to make the religion of our times, more and more distinctly, for the worthier service of God and the greater service of man, the service of truth.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting was held at Essex Hall on Wednesday evening, under the presidency of Mr. T. GROSVENOR LEE.

An opening hymn, "Eternal Life, whose Love Divine," having been sung, the CHAIRMAN called on the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie to submit the Report of the Executive Committee.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The Report stated that the work planned and accomplished during the past year had been more extensive and varied than usual. The Association did not claim or seek ecclesiastical jurisdiction over congregations; it was simply a society of men and women who voluntarily gave their money and joined together for the purpose of extending the knowledge of the principles, truths, and ideals of Unitarian Christianity.

"The Association exists," it was added, "for the diffusion of the principles of Unitarian Christianity, but Unitarian Christianity is no hard, cold, sterile system of doctrinal theology: it is, to those who understand it and care for it, a great inspiring religion which touches human thought and life on every side, and is aglow with reverence, faith, and love. Dogmas which contradict reason and conscience have been abandoned, new facts and theories of the universe have been welcomed, but the doctrines of the Fatherhood of God, the immortality of man, and the reality of a spiritual life remain at the very heart's core of Unitarian Christianity; the love of liberty and progress, and the desire to free and uplift mankind from the thralldom of sin and selfishness, find their constant inspiration in this faith."

FINANCE.

The accounts showed a falling-off of subscriptions, chiefly owing to the death of several generous subscribers, of £52. The year began with a balance of £47 1s. 10d. in hand: subscriptions amounting to £1,839 4s. were received, and donations £387 14s. 6d. One hundred and fifty-seven congregations contributed in annual collections £466 13s. 1d., the largest amount and the largest number of congregations collecting since the institution of

Association Sunday in 1883. Book-room receipts were £1,372 16s. 7d. The total ordinary income, including interest on investments, &c., was £5,060 3s. 3d. The expenditure included £3,028 17s. grants to congregations and missionaries, and books and tracts to postal missions, churches, and individuals; £957 10s. 5d. for printing and other expenses in the publication department; salaries £624 17s.; maintenance and office expenses £213 10s. 3d., making with other items a total of £4,946 1s. 11d., and leaving a balance of £42 19s. 1d. to be carried over to 1898. A legacy of £1,000 from Mr. James Heywood, F.R.S., who was president in 1866-67, was received early in the present year. Acknowledgment was made of the services of the hon. treasurer, Mr. Percy Preston, who retired after holding office for six years, but would remain a member of the Committee.

MISSION WORK.

The grants to congregations and societies amounted to £2,482, the largest sum expended in any year on mission work, except in 1884. Eighty congregations in all benefited, the new and promising movements at Ashton-under-Lyne, Lewisham, Small Heath (Birmingham) and Woolwich having received substantial aid. The regular reports of District Superintendent Missionaries had been of great service to the Committee. High appreciation was expressed of the services of the Rev. Dendy Agate, who had resigned his position in connection with the Manchester District Association to become minister at Altrincham. Following the case of bigotry in the School Board of Stratford-on-Avon, Sunday evening services had been held in the town, organised by the Rev. J. Harrison. Dr. Griffiths had followed up his missionary tour of 1893 in North Wales, and received a much more generous reception than previously. The Rev. G. St. Clair had lectured in South Wales and the West of England, and was to continue this special work in the coming autumn. The Rev. R. H. Lambley had settled at Melbourne, and the Rev. Ramsden Balmforth at Cape Town.

PUBLICATIONS.

Grants of 1,657 books and 113,236 tracts were made during the year. The following were among the new publications:—"The Significance of the Teaching of Jesus," the Essex Hall Lecture for 1897, by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A.; "From the Old Faith to the New," a series of theological essays by Mr. P. E. Vizard; "The Place of Immortality in Religious Belief," a valuable treatise by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A.; "The Triumph of Faith," the Fourth Series of "Tracts for the Times"; a second and cheaper edition of "God and the Soul," with an interesting preface dealing with criticisms of the first edition, by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A.; a new edition of "Christ the Revealer," by the late Rev. J. Hamilton Thom.

Through the Fund raised by Mr. Julian Winsor as many as ninety congregations up to the end of the year had obtained pulpit copies of the Revised Version of the Bible; and through the S.S.A. the Committee had circulated 1,000 copies of the Revised New Testament at a cheap rate among elder scholars and teachers.

MCQUAKER FUND.

The year's expenditure included £238 15s. in grants to churches, £348 14s. 3d. for special services and lectures, and £135 13s. 7d. for book and tract distribution. The total outlay was £807 15s. 8d., leaving a balance of £468 18s. 8d., which, however, would go in the grant of £500 for the new church building at Kirkcaldy. Another grant of £500 had been promised for the new church and school contemplated by the Aberdeen congregation, on condition that not less than £3,000 is raised, inclusive of the amount received for the present church and land.

WORK IN INDIA.

From all parts of India applications were received for grants of books and tracts. A copy of Mr. Armstrong's book "God and the Soul" was offered to any University graduate who should apply for it, and in a short time

150 applications were received. Upward of 6,000 tracts and 250 books were sent out in response to personal applications during the last six months. At Manchester College Mr. Promotho Ioll Sen, of the Brahmo Somaj, would complete his course in June, and devote himself to religious work among his own people. Mr. Ahmed Shah, to the regret of the Committee, had withdrawn from Manchester College. The Rev. S. Fletcher Williams had undertaken to represent the Association in India for the next three years, and would sail in October.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND LITERATURE FUND.

The Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, as special preacher, had visited thirty-four churches in different parts of the country, from October, 1897, to May, 1898, and from every side reports of the keen interest awakened and the refreshment derived from these visits had been received. It was hoped that Mr. Brooke would resume this work in October. The Committee had also forwarded copies of Dr. Drummond's "The Pauline Benediction" to a number of leading clergymen and Nonconformist ministers, and to the principal and professors of theological colleges, with gratifying results.

OBITUARY.

The Committee recorded with sincere regret the death of Mr. James Heywood, M.A., F.R.S., and of the following members of the Council:—Mr. Herbert Bramley, Town Clerk of Sheffield; Mr. Walter C. Clemmell, of London, who served on the Executive Committee; Mr. James M. Darbishire, of Liverpool; the Rev. David Davis, B.A., of Evesham; Professor Francis William Newman, of Weston-super-Mare; and Mr. Charles Woollen, of Sheffield. So recently as May 11 of the present year the death was announced of Mr. Charles Cochrane, from whom a legacy of over £3,000 was received; and during the year a large number of other faithful supporters had been lost.

The TREASURER (Mr. Percy Preston) then made a brief statement relating to the financial condition of the Association, and said they had to regret the death of some earnest friends, who, however munificent they had been at the end of their lives, could be ill spared. They valued the active work of these friends infinitely more than the legacies they bestowed on their death. Nevertheless, it was good to know that these friends remembered the Association when they departed this life, and in this connection he might mention the splendid legacy left by Mr. Charles Cochrane, a generous supporter, who had died as recently as May 11 last.

The CHAIRMEN of Sub-Committees then made brief statements.

The Rev. W. G. TARRANT said that the cost of the Book Department had last year decreased by the sum of £90, and there had been an increase in business amounting to over £100. He could hope that there would be a greater demand from buyers of books than there had been. He ventured to hope that many orthodox persons would be able to be reached by the tracts that were distributed, and even if these did not accept Unitarianism, at all events much good would be done by the new aspect of Christianity which would be put before them, and they would then realise the Unitarian's real view. They had a large number of tracts in stock. Very frequently he received suggestions as to the advisability of issuing tracts upon subjects which had been treated already. This showed that some of these earnest folk were but ill-acquainted with the literature the Association had issued. Still, they were always ready to listen to useful suggestions in this connection, and, if possible, to adopt them.

Mr. ION PRITCHARD, Chairman of the

Scottish Committee, gave particulars as to work in the North.

The Rev. Dr. BROOKE HERFORD, Chairman of the Indian Committee, said that it would be observed that in the Report the section relating to the work undertaken by the Indian Committee was not headed "Indian Mission," but simply "Work in India." His Committee did not run an Indian Mission. It did not regard its Hindu friends as exactly the objects for missionary work in the old sense of the word. The Committee never proposed, and never would propose, to go to them as if they were a perishing race, for whom there could be no hope if the Committee did not go forth to find them, and to rescue them. He thought that a great deal of Christian work had been done in India in a practical sense; but Christianity had never, he maintained, had a fair chance in that mighty country yet. He and his Committee wished to give India a chance of looking at it in a fresh light. They were endeavouring to do all they possibly could in that country, and it was gratifying to know that there had been a large number of applications for Mr. Armstrong's book during 1897. The speaker then described the work that was being done at the four points at which the Association touched India, dwelling especially upon the work undertaken among the Khasi Hill tribes, for whom a new hymn-book was being prepared, towards the cost of which the Committee had promised to contribute.

Mr. J. F. SCHWANN made a statement as to the work of the Special Services Committee, and the preaching of the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke.

The CHAIRMAN said he had especially arranged that his remarks should be short and that the major portion of his address would be given at the Conference on the following morning. He would simply remind his hearers of the two serious losses which the Association had sustained during the past year in the deaths of Mr. James Heywood, a former President, and Mr. Charles Cochrane, of Stourbridge. The former gentleman had been greatly interested in the work, and had done a great deal in a most generous manner for the development of religious liberty. He had shown his personal interest by leaving large and handsome legacies for the furtherance of the work. Anyone who had read the reports of the Association for the past eight or ten years would be aware of the interest taken in its affairs and, in fact, anything Unitarian, by the late Mr. Charles Cochrane, who, partly through hearing preachers expound the Unitarian doctrine, and partly through reading books, had become converted from an entirely different way of thinking in which he was brought up. He never seemed tired of speaking of the great benefit he had derived from Unitarianism, and was willing to give in a measure, which some called lavish, to help others in the same path. The legacy which he had given to the Association showed, at any rate, the great interest which he had felt, but at the same time all must feel that a legacy was but a small thing compared with the work of such a man during his lifetime for the cause. He had much pleasure in moving the adoption of the report.

The Rev. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A. (Oxford), in seconding the resolution said, if the work of the Association were

to be tested by any of the ordinary tests, the Executive might congratulate itself upon a year of thoroughly useful work. The Treasurer's statement had not actually presented in words the total figures of the receipts and expenditure of the Association, but during the past year it had been in a position of financial prosperity. He called attention to the fact that the expenditure was almost precisely halved by one important item in the business of the Association—namely, the grants to congregations and missionaries for the purpose of aiding churches. The amount came to £2,482—or, roughly speaking, one half of the expenditure, which was a significant figure. Of late they had been invited to consider seriously their position as members of the Association. It was not needful for him to remind his hearers of the history of the Association or to recall that they were simply an association of individuals banded together for the common purpose of promoting the principles of religion summed up under the general title of Unitarian Christianity. Historically their Association really grew out of different roots, one of which was in early time a book and tract association for the diffusion of literature. In the course of time it happened that when the tract, sermon, and book went forth, they got into the hands of many to whom the principles of Unitarianism had been unknown, and the demands for places of worship founded on the religious principles which were expounded in that literature became more and more frequent, and thus by degrees the Association was called into existence. They were confronted by different questions. One was how far this Association was justified in collecting money and expending it on the promotion of congregations of kindred religious sympathies, but in no way committed to this particular doctrine. The Association had, as any reader of its reports would know, taken express pains to prevent the supposition that it desired to exercise any kind of ecclesiastical domination. He could not understand that the Association should be charged to any considerable extent with inconsistency. Why should those who associated themselves together for a totally different purpose be advised to adopt a different platform from that on which they themselves had met together? That supposed inconsistency had in reality no legitimate standing whatever. Personally, he desired to stand in the profoundest sense for that principle which was the basis of our individual congregational life, which in another field had been termed that of the open door. He would venture to say that those principles would give rise to no unhappy complications. It would involve, possibly, graceful concessions, but at least they could be quite certain that it would not lead to war. They had sometimes to recognise that they were in danger of setting up an idol of liberty, and ignoring the fact that every assembly of worshippers involved certain preliminary intellectual results. We could not come to God unless we first believed what He was. Would to God that that were a conception that could not be challenged. Would it were the opinion the wide world over, and that we were all agreed in that great faith. But no; it was well known that there were many who were yearning to promote righteousness who were unable

to utter the name of God. There were many who actually entered our churches with a pious aspiration, joining in its worship though they could not utter the word "Father" in prayer. He ventured to say that the minister who dared to take such a position would find himself in a false place, and his duty would be to bid his congregation a regretful farewell. In the college from which he came the motto was "To truth, to liberty, and to religion." But that college was a college for the teaching, and therefore learning, of theology. It made the assumption that theology was possible with the study of the way from God to man, which study was a legitimate and lawful one, though it invited all to pursue it with the utmost allegiance to truth and truth alone. Supposing that he were to become so that he could not say "Our Father," he could still believe that theology was a most proper study, and that it was desirable that it should be investigated and taught; but he would feel entirely unable to remain in a college to lecture on the subject to young men preparing for the ministry of religion. There must be a certain common assumption—our life based upon the conviction of what we were and of what God was. He would never conceal his preference for an Association of our Free Churches, which the twentieth century might possibly sometime see, and to which the gifts of this Association might ultimately be allotted. There would still remain a good deal of important work for the Association to do in connection with those principles to which they were inseparably bound. He knew there was a danger in organisation—it was a perpetual peril. It was well that we should be bidden to take heed to our ways, and it was well that voices were raised in criticism, even though they might not be wise. When he saw the forces of unbelief and sacerdotalism which were arrayed on every side, he saw it was plain that the Association had work to do. With churches or without churches it had got to be done. It was always a question where to draw the line; but he had no hesitation in saying that so long as the Association was the organ representing all the churches he would, with his whole heart, support the work of the British and Foreign Association.

After some remarks from the Revs. W. Blazeby, W. Lloyd, and Mr. E. Capleton, the resolution was carried.

Dr. BLAKE ODGERS then moved the following resolution:—

That the Draft Rules as amended and submitted by the Committee be and are hereby adopted as the Rules of the Association.

This having been seconded by Mr. Ion PRITCHARD, the Chairman, in his individual capacity, proposed the following amendment:—

That in Rule 3, section iv., the words "a delegate" be substituted for the words "two delegates," the words "a member" for "members," and the word "Committee" for "Council," and that a corresponding addition be made to Rule 11.

After some discussion the amendment was lost, and the original resolution carried.

The Rev. A. N. BLATCHFORD proposed the following resolution:—

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to the President, the Officers, and the Executive Committee for their valuable services during the past year, and that the

following be the respective appointments for the coming year:—President: Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.; Treasurer: Oswald Nettlefold, Esq.; Secretary: Rev. W. Copeland Bowie; Solicitor: Howard Young, Esq., LL.B.; Trustees: S. S. Tayler, Esq., David Martineau, Esq., J.P., W. Blake Odgers, Esq., Q.C., Sir E. Durning-Lawrence, Bart., M.P.; Auditors: C. Fleetwood Pritchard, Esq., H. B. Lawford, Esq., J. Sudbery, Esq.; Past Presidents and Council: Executive Committee: Mr. G. L. Bristow, Mr. Howard Chatfield Clarke, Mr. Edwin Clephan, J.P., Rev. V. D. Davis, B.A., Mr. Charles Fenton, Rev. James Harwood, B.A., Miss E. M. Lawrence, Mr. G. H. Leigh, Rev. T. L. Marshall, Mr. David Martineau, J.P., Mr. J. S. Mathers, J.P., Mr. Frederick Nettlefold, Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., Mr. Percy Preston, Mr. Stanton W. Preston, Mr. Ion Pritchard, Mr. J. F. Schwann, J.P., Miss Tagart, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., Mr. S. S. Tayler.

In doing so he called the attention of the meeting to the officers who had laid down their trust after a year of honourable service. Mr. Percy Preston, after faithful service, had found it necessary to lay down his staff of office as treasurer. He was the son of a father who had been one of the mainstays of the Association: It was most interesting to find that Mr. Percy Preston was succeeded in his office by Mr. Oswald Nettlefold, himself the son of a gentleman who bore the office of treasurer in the days gone by, and who carried with him the respect and love and heartfelt appreciation of all who knew him. Mr. Howard Clarke, too, brought with him all the prestige of an honoured name. Another name he wanted to mention was that of Sir E. Durning-Lawrence, Bart., one of the new trustees, who was one who had stood loyal to the old flag. There was one officer who was not going to change his berth, and that was their secretary, Mr. Copeland Bowie, and he would be guilty of the greatest possible ingratitude if he did not wish that gentleman, on behalf of the Association, every good wish as to his future, and to thank him for his past services. He also wanted to congratulate the Association upon having for its chairman Dr. Brooke Herford. He congratulated Dr. Herford upon having ascended to the seat of honour which he had earned, not only by his faithful services in the Unitarian cause, but by his kindly manner, his gentle, bright, and loving spirit. The interests of the Association were safe in that gentleman's hands, and he did not think it required much prophecy to say that the Association was about to have a successful year's work.

Sir PHILIP MANFIELD seconded, and the resolution was unanimously carried.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed the following resolution:—

That the hearty welcome of this Meeting be given to the following Representatives of affiliated and kindred Associations and Societies, with an expression of its appreciation for, and its sympathy with, the good work they are severally doing for the maintenance and extension of the principles of Unitarian Christianity:—East Cheshire Union, Rev. B. C. Constable, Stockport; Eastern Union, Rev. Edgar Daplyn, Norwich; Irish Unitarian Society, Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., Belfast; Liverpool District Association, Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., Liverpool; London District Society, S. S. Tayler, Esq., London; London and S. E. C. Provincial Assembly, G. W. Chitty, Esq., Dover; Manchester District Association, G. H. Leigh, Esq., Swinton; Midland Christian Union, Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., Birmingham; North and East Lancashire Mission, Rev. R. T. Herford, B.A., Stand; North Midland Asso-

ciation, Rev. Henry Gow, B.A., Leicester; Northumberland and Durham Association, Rev. A. Harvie, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Southern Association, H. Blessley, Esq., Portsmouth; Western Union, Rev. F. W. Stanley, Bath; Yorkshire Union, J. S. Mathers, Esq., Leeds, and Rev. E. Ceredig Jones, Bradford; Scottish Association, James Graham, Esq., Glasgow; South-East Wales Society, Rev. Philemon Moore, B.A. Carmarthen; South Wales Unitarian Association, Rev. Jenkyn Thomas, Aberdare.

Mr. DAVID MARTINEAU seconded, and, in a brief speech, testified to the good work being carried on by the kindred Associations in the country, which he sincerely hoped would continue to meet with due reward.

The resolution was unanimously carried.

Mr. J. S. MATHERS replied, thanking the the British and Foreign Unitarian Association for the assistance rendered.

The PRESIDENT then proposed:—

That this Meeting of members and friends of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association extends its warmest welcome to the Representatives of liberal and progressive religious thought from abroad; and hereby conveys the expression of its gratitude, esteem, and sympathy to those who, in all parts of the world, are earnestly labouring for the spread of religious truth and freedom. That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Foreign Correspondents of the Association in America, Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Norway, and Switzerland.

The Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A., seconded. He regretted that as their time was so limited they could not properly express the warmth with which they welcomed their guests from the various parts of the world, but he hoped that that welcome would not be measured by the length of the speeches. Having referred to different lands named in the resolution, and to the welcome presence of M. Hocart, from Brussels, he spoke of Italy—the classic land of religion—a land whose history illustrated the whole of cultivated human thought—a land of marvel in art, in philosophy, and in literature. They had with them that evening a representative of that country, not a representative of a New Catholicism, but one who was in whole sympathy with that religion with which he and his hearers were closely identified. To him they held out the brother's hand and the cordial linking of brothers' hearts, and welcomed him as a representative of those who were trying to lead the people to a true religion.

Signor F. BRACCIFORTI (of Milan) said, in reply, that he supposed he had been selected for that honour because he happened to be the oldest among the foreign delegates. In Italy—the land of an ancient religion—there were but two logical positions offered to men, one of which they had to select. One was an acceptance of the Church of Rome, the other adherence to the faith of the indwelling God, whose religion was maintained by the light of reason, by the brain as well as the heart. From these two extremes they had to choose, and was it possible they could choose the Church of Rome, of which the Pontiff was led by the Jesuits, who, if they could work their will, would revive the horrors of the Inquisition; who would burn heretics again if they could; who would suppress liberty of conscience if they could? In the late troubles in his country the hands of the Jesuits could be clearly perceived. Help was wanted to fight against this powerful

organisation, against which nothing but rebellion would avail to secure their rights. Help was needed to wrest their due from the organised priesthood who wished to suppress the liberty of the human conscience. There was but one alternative to accepting the priestly code, and that was the acceptance of Unitarianism; and he would remind his hearers that Italian Unitarians were second to none in the love of that Master whom they all loved. He (the speaker) was proud to be able to convey to that assembly a cordial and fraternal greeting from his fellow-countrymen, and especially from the congregation of Don Miraglia, of Piacenza. He trusted that his people would eventually perceive the beauties of the faith they all accepted.

The CHAIRMAN moved, and the Rev. DENDY AGATE, B.A., seconded the following resolution:—

That this Meeting sends its sincere goodwill and earnest sympathy to all who are working for purer religion and morality in India; and while giving special greeting to those who have attached themselves to our own household of faith, includes as Brethren in the same cause of religious freedom, the Brahmo Somajes of India—rejoicing in the progress they have made in the past, and trusting that in closer union they may find ever-increasing strength. And this Meeting accords to the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams its hearty congratulations and best wishes on his appointment as the representative of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in India.

Mr. PROMOTHO LOLL SEN, responding, spoke as follows:—Mr. Chairman and Friends,—If I had not read the leader in *THE INQUIRER* last week perhaps I should have only repeated in my own words the sentiments of the writer of it. And I do not know if I have a spirit different from his when I am going to respond to the resolution which has been just proposed and seconded. As a representative of the Brahmo Somaj in India it is nothing short of joy that I feel in having this opportunity of addressing you who are among the representatives of the Christian Church here. Perhaps this will be my last opportunity of speaking to you. If so it cannot be better used than by exchanging with you, not empty words of compliment or thanks, but the highest love of truth of which our souls are capable at the present moment. It is not quite two years since I came to this country, and I cannot help recalling to my mind now the words in which I responded to the President's charge to me at the farewell meeting held in Calcutta just before I left. I said:—"Born in this country, at this time, into the New Dispensation, I deem it a very high privilege to find before me such an opportunity as the present one of making myself better fitted for the work to which the Heavenly Father has called me. With His blessing and the blessings and good wishes of you all I go to learn from His children in the West what they have got to teach me, a child of the East." Reviewing my experiences in England in general, and in Oxford in particular, I find they have added to the experiences I had already in a manner I had never before dreamt of. As a son of modern India I came to your country having in my soul the light of the Spirit which is working there. I shall go back to my country with the added light of the same Spirit which is working here also. I have not lived among strangers but among children of the Father in heaven, whom we are all

called upon to worship in spirit and in truth. Believe me, by finding for the members of the Brahmo Somaj the means of studying in Manchester College, Oxford, you have opened the way to the establishment of better relations between yourselves and us, and, what is more, between true Englishmen and true Indians. I am not here to say whether the initiative taken by you is more to be praised for its opportuneness than for its kindness—perhaps it is kind because it is so opportune. And if the Brahmo Somaj Committee in Calcutta, mindful of its responsibility, takes care to select and send the proper person, he will give you what is best in the character of the modern Indian, and take back with him what is best in the character of the modern Englishman. He will find, as I have found, that the Principal and Professors of Manchester College are men for whom he cannot but feel sincere respect, and I hope he will find his fellow-students as I have found mine—those whom it will be easy to love as brothers. Outside his college he will have opportunities of meeting with genuine Englishmen, and studying those traits in the Englishman's character which are wanting in his own. In this way, my friends, the help which you have offered us will not only lay us under obligation but lay you also under deeper obligation. For is not all obligation unto God, and by discharging a responsibility do we not create a new one? If, therefore, you extend to us the right hand of fellowship you do not thereby free yourself from any responsibility you felt, but are really laid under a higher and deeper one. My friends, we are living in times when we see on all sides the manifestations of a new life. I am thankful for nothing so much as for this, that I was born in the latter half of this century, and not earlier nor later, and that I was born not into an atheistic world, as Carlyle would say of the world of his time, but into what we love to call the New Dispensation. A new spirit stands revealed to us all now. It is the Spirit of God, and what we ask from you is what you also are consciously or unconsciously asking from us. It is more *life* in the light of this spirit. We cannot understand each other, we cannot know our duties to each other save in the light of a higher, a better, an altogether new life. And to this life you are called as much as we and "our common aim," in the words of the writer in *THE INQUIRER*, is "that we may receive a larger measure of that Spirit of which the fruit is love, joy, and peace."

Mr. A. M. BOSE also acknowledged the resolution in an eloquent speech.

The Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS expressed his deep sense of appreciation of the confidence reposed in him by the Committee in appointing him as missionary to the British and Foreign Unitarian Society in India. He could go out there and work believing that he had the brotherly sympathy of all connected with the Institution.

The PRESIDENT then moved:—

That this meeting of the members and friends of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association supports the Bill now before the House of Commons dealing with marriages in Nonconformist Chapels, on the ground of religious equality. This meeting regards the provision for not requiring the presence of a Registrar as essential, unless his presence is required at all marriages wheresoever celebrated; and further regards it as essential that clauses should be inserted in the Bill providing

for the registration of persons authorised to perform the marriage service, as well as for the registration of the buildings in which the service may be performed.

The Rev. JAMES HARWOOD, B.A., seconded, and said that the resolution was the result of a Conference of London ministers who had had to face a difficult state of things, but who now recommended the resolution for adoption. There were, no doubt, different views held on the subject, but they did not here raise the question as to whether or not the Registrar should be present in Established Churches—it was simply the question of religious liberty. He had heard objection to the last clause, but there was nothing within the four corners of the Bill to prevent the casual passer-by being called in to act as minister, and it was, therefore, essential to have a qualified person to perform such an important office.

The Rev. T. L. MARSHALL urged the withdrawal of the resolution, putting in the plea that it was a late hour to discuss such a matter. If the resolution was not withdrawn he would have to oppose it.

The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Marshall had brought the matter before the notice of the Committee, and it would be extremely hard if he were not given an opportunity to discuss the question. Therefore, as it was so late, he would assent to the withdrawal.

Upon the motion of Mr. HARWOOD, seconded by Mr. WORTHINGTON, it was agreed that the Committee should be asked to take the matter of the resolution into their consideration for further report thereon.

Mr. EDWIN CLEPHAN, J.P. (Leicester) proposed, and the Rev. THOMAS DUNKERLEY seconded:—"That the cordial thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. Klein, the preacher of the anniversary sermon, to the congregation at Hampstead, and other friends in London for their hospitality."

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the President.

THE CONFERENCE.

On Thursday morning Mr. T. GROSVENOR LEE (President) took the chair at the Conference in connection with the British and Foreign Association at Essex Hall.

The Chairman, in his opening remarks, dealt with the question of a Free Church, and what was really meant or what different sections of people meant by religious freedom in Free Churches. There were undoubtedly different meanings of the word when applied to a Church. First, the simplest and most common meaning was that the Free Church was a church which was free from State control, independent of the State, and not under State management at all. That was the old meaning of a Free Church, and he reminded his hearers that the freedom was quite consistent with a narrow theological creed. In churches where matters were strictly orthodox or where there was a definition, every Christian and every Theistic institution came in under that meaning of the word Free, and it was consistent with strict theological test for Church members and Church ministers. There was a sense in which people said the Church was Free, because it was free from ancient and narrow doctrines which had become untenable

under modern criticism. The Church was said to have a liberal religion, or a free religion, meaning that it was free for the development of theological opinion. The Unitarian congregations had always accepted the results of modern science and modern criticism without thinking that any foundation of religion was being destroyed. In that particular sense of freedom the Unitarians had always been pioneers. He remembered the time well when it was thought to be very dangerous and very serious to have doubts on the matter of the Flood. It was considered rather questionable years ago to hint that the throat of the modern whale could not have swallowed Jonah, or even kept him alive. Even when those matters were thought to be dangerous, twenty years ago, the Unitarians always felt little difficulty in accepting criticism which destroyed some of those stories without in any way giving up the greater positions of Christianity. On that question all would agree that that was a proper definition of a Free Church. But there was a somewhat more technical definition, on which he did not think he should enter into controversy. It was very clearly stated by Mr. Freeston in *THE INQUIRER* in a letter on April 25, in which he said that "A Free Church is a church in which belief in any special doctrine is not made compulsory by a trust deed or imposed by Church authorities on ministers or Church members." That was a very fair definition of a position in which most of the Unitarian congregation shared. No doubt there were some congregations which had in their boxes that they never looked into, deeds with some dogmatic limitations. But these were exceptions. The usual words in these deeds were "Protestant Dissenters," which words distinctly made it impossible for those churches to join the community of the Church of Rome or of the Church of England. If they were Protestant dissenters, as the deeds provided, they were practically prevented from those two steps.

It had been said—and said rather a great deal lately—that intentionally there had never been anything put into the trust deeds about the denial of the Trinity. A good deal of the high faluting worship of our ancestors had been based upon this statement. The reason why the denial of the Trinity was not put into the trust deeds had very little to do with the reasons that were frequently given. People seemed to forget that until the year 1813 it was absolutely illegal for those who denied the Trinity to join in public worship. Therefore he did not think that any lawyer would put such a clause in a deed. It would have been foolish to do so, seeing that it was possible for a person denying the Trinity to be prosecuted. That was probably an explanation why there had never been an attempt to impose the strict denial of the Trinity. The result had been that those old congregations were practically free to believe as they liked, so long as they did not become Roman Catholic or Church of England. The minister was not free as the minister in the Church of England was. In that Church the minister, unless he was attacked by the Bishop, could say that the word "black" was "white," and he could explain away what was attested by law and still hold his living. But with a dissenting

minister, if the congregation did not change with him, he would practically feel that he must leave his people. Dealing with recent additional meanings, the speaker said that it had been said that a Free Church was a Church in which no particular doctrines were implied either in the name of the church or on the notice board outside. But the last and most extreme meaning that had been offered was one which said that no particular doctrines were to be implied as affording the basis for the Church or as the bond of fellowship, but that a sufficient basis of union was found in the pursuit of such ends as repentance, kindness, justice, purity, courage and godliness. All those were very excellent things, but in his opinion they included by no means a sufficient basis for the union of a Church. He would put before them the views of a practical layman on this subject, although he did not want to go into any theological discussion. He had had a very practical experience himself. Within ten minutes of his house there was a parish church. There was a clergyman, a kind and godly man. He happened to be a strong ritualist, conducting a service in his own way. There were three other parish churches, and he should be sorry to say that the clergymen did not fulfil all ethical requirements. A large majority of his friends go to those churches. His children's friends did so. Nevertheless, he and his children went three and a-half miles to worship in an old-fashioned chapel attended by less than fifty persons, with whom he had no special connection. Why? Well, the reason was that those fifty worshippers and their minister held the same religious opinions as he himself did. It was not because they were free that he desired to worship with them, although that freedom had been, and would be, an important incident. It was the present result of that freedom with which he was concerned, not the results of fifty years hence. He did not yield to anyone in his appreciation of what all genuine Christians united in desiring to attain, but as he considered that religious opinions were of great importance, he desired that he and his family should worship where they could find agreement with those religious opinions which at the present time were to them religious truth. Any other bond of union was vague and unstable as a basis of the Church. They would not find it easy to worship with people from whom they differed on such extremely important matters. In conclusion, he would like to add one word to ministers, as apart from laymen, by way of warning. If ministers, especially those who had been so forward in the enunciation of those opinions to which he had referred, succeeded in convincing their congregations that religious opinions were of small consequence as compared with the liberty to change them or with the pursuit of general ethical principles, then it was clear that Protestant dissent, as it had existed for 200 years, would disappear, and their congregations would necessarily dissolve into three elements. A certain proportion of members of such a congregation would inevitably become conventional members of the Established Church, for they would be able to attend churches which they would not have to support, where they would be able to hear good music and more or less

able preaching. A section would become Agnostics, justifying themselves by the thought that if religious opinions did not matter, they would not bother, and the result would be that these Agnostics would in the second generation develop into devout Roman Catholics. The third section would be composed of those whom he could only designate Materialists. These were always to be found and would continue to be found, saying "Don't let us trouble about religion or about benefiting mankind, but let us enjoy ourselves to the top of our bent." He (the speaker) would like to remind the ministers to whom he was addressing these words of warning that some of their arguments might, had they been employed, have prevented the Reformation. It required no great powers of imagination to think of some of the purer of the early Roman Catholics, saying "We are all agreed about the ideals of courage and of justice; why, therefore, should we bother about the Pope and the morality and religion of the priests?" If ministers really wanted to move people, then they must have a clear idea of what they wanted to put before their congregations. He particularly urged ministers and other teachers to know exactly what they meant and to endeavour to put it as clearly as possible before those who were willing to listen. He considered that his opinions on the matter had never been better expressed than in the words of the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, who in *THE INQUIRER* of May 21 had written as follows:—"Our modern Unitarianism, with its intellectual amplitude and its transcendent affirmations, is the fruit of the faithfulness and devotion of many generations of godly ministers and faithful people, and it is a possession of great price, worth many sacrifices, worthy of much loyalty, having in it much which the world sorely needs. And it were shame and ignominy to us indeed to be indifferent to its sublime affirmations, or the great message of fatherhood and brotherhood which it offers to the world. These can be treated in no way as secondary or unimportant. We are custodians, guardians, trustees of the truth won, no less than of the freedom through which it has been won. To treasure the freedom and despise its fruits were folly indeed. And it is laid on us to see that the teachings of what seems to us at once the simplest and the most beautiful Gospel which the world has ever known, be set within the reach of all to whom it may be a comfort, a strength, a help, and an inspiration."

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr. JOHN DENDY, of Manchester, to read his paper on—

OUR CHURCH LIFE, SOCIAL AND BENEVOLENT.

I desire to preface my remarks by an explanation. Objection has been taken to the dealing by this Association with matters relating to "our churches." I have some sympathy with this objection, though I do not wish to discuss now the thorny questions which it raises. What I desire to do is to make it clear that when I use the phrase "our churches," I mean simply the churches with which we are individually connected, and to guard against any implication of a connection between the churches and the Association.

My next effort must be to try to reduce the somewhat vague subject allotted to me to a more definite and manageable form.

In connection with our churches are to be found institutions, practices, and customs,

often considerable in number and very varied in character, which are something over and above the regular assemblies for public worship and the distinctively religious instruction. These, which I propose to call the "allied institutions of our churches," may, to a large extent, be regarded as the outcome or expression of that social and benevolent life which we are invited to consider to-day. They are its manifestations, and I think it will lend point and usefulness to our discussion if we direct our attention to them. May we not say of that social and benevolent life "by its fruits ye shall know it?"

VARIETY OF INSTITUTIONS.

Consider for a moment how varied these institutions are, and what an amount of time and energy they absorb. From the Grand Bazaar to the Congregational poor's purse, from the Sunday-school dramatic society to the Band of Hope, here is range and variety enough to give opportunity of expression to whatever life there may be in a church, and to re-act upon that life with results which may also be of a varying character. It does not follow that everything which grows out of our church life must necessarily be beneficial.

I do not propose to attempt a detailed discussion, or even an enumeration, of these allied institutions. It appears to me, however, that there are certain principles applicable to them all, certain conditions to which they should conform, which may be usefully considered. Before, however, proceeding to do so, there is one general remark to be made.

THE CHURCH'S AIM.

Our estimate of the value and importance of these allied institutions will vary according to our ideas as to the object and purpose of the churches with which they are connected. Let us put aside, as to in question here, the public worship of God—a primary object of all churches as at present constituted. We may agree about that; but if we ask, What next? there may be some tendency to disagreement. Some may say that the next object is to strengthen the faithful in their adherence to a particular form of theological belief, and to make converts to that belief. Such persons will be tempted to rate highly the value of any institution which holds the faithful together, and helps to draw in outsiders without examining too closely into any other effects which it may have.

There will be others who will put before that object of a church another—namely, the building up in individuals of the religious or higher life, and the formation of character. With these I take my stand. They will inquire about any given institution not so much "Does it bring adherents to the cause?" but rather "How is it affecting the characters of those whom it touches?"

EFFECT ON CHARACTER.

This leads me to the first principle or condition which I wish to suggest with regard to these allied institutions. They must be judged and tested by their effect upon character and the religious life, rather than by their success in attracting and interesting members or raising funds. Later on I shall try to make a few applications of this and other principles. At present I confine myself to observing that it is quite possible to spoil a good Christian in making a nominal Unitarian or any other kind of denominational convert. We Unitarians are very apt to plume ourselves upon character as our strong point. There may have been, probably was, something in this at one time. To-day, however, I do not see the slightest ground for believing that, in this respect, we are any better than our neighbours. The feeling of superiority, however, remains, and is a distinct danger to be guarded against.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHERS.

The second condition is this. Our institutions must not be allowed to make for isolation and exclusiveness. We want to break down barriers between ourselves and other people, and to this end we should welcome co-operation wherever possible. It is a mistake to maintain little institutions of our own, when the ends which they are intended to serve would be

as well or better attained by throwing our strength into larger efforts. The life in our churches needs to be invigorated and freshened by contact with the life which is pulsating around us. We want to come as much as possible into friendly contact with other people. Isolation is a curse which has been, to a large extent, forced upon us. It inevitably leads to narrowness and provincialism, and it is for us to struggle against it in every legitimate manner. Now to set up little separate institutions of our own, for carrying out purposes which might be as well achieved in combination with other people, is to acquiesce in and perpetuate this isolation. There is a good deal of educational and charitable work which could formerly be done only by church organisations, but which to-day can be better done by organisations which are not connected with any particular religious body. We should be careful that we do not seek to maintain feeble competing agencies, whereby the work is less efficiently done, and the workers are cut off from a wider communion. There is no merit in running a little show of your own, instead of playing a useful, if inconspicuous, part in the larger drama of the national life.

ECONOMY OF EFFORT.

The third point upon which I wish to insist, is that of efficiency and economy of effort. Institutions tend to perpetuate themselves independently of their usefulness and efficiency. They need to be constantly overhauled from this point of view: Are they worth maintaining? Never mind who started them, or how useful they have been in the past. The question is as to their efficiency to-day. The new wine is constantly needing new bottles. There is but a limited supply of energy available in connection with any church. The problem is how to make the best use possible of what there is, to turn it into channels in which it will be most fruitful of good results. It must not be expended in whipping dead horses, nor in vain endeavours to grow plants for which the local soil is not suitable. In no two churches are the conditions exactly alike. It follows that the institutions in which the life of different churches is expressed will differ from one another more or less. It is a mistake to suppose that, because a thing flourishes and is productive of good in one place, it is necessarily proper to be adopted in another. Not a monotonous uniformity, but a healthy variety, not a pious perpetuation of the old so much as a vigorous adaptation to changed conditions are what we should aim at. We must ask of all our institutions this question, Are the results obtained fairly proportionate to the energy expended? Are they really giving the best possible expression to to what life there is in us? We are in regard to our customs and practices a conservative, or perhaps rather a whiggish body, difficult to persuade that we have not already got the best way of doing everything we set our hands to. It is a characteristic which goes along with that conscious superiority to which I have referred. We suffer from both.

Now let us turn to our allied institutions themselves, and attempt some applications of these principles or conditions.

INSTITUTIONS.—(1.) FOR RAISING FUNDS.

They, the institutions, seem to fall mainly into four classes. First and worst, those whose object is simply the raising of funds, and which find their *raison d'être* in the invincible dislike of most people to direct taxation. The bazaar and sale of work are the prominent examples. They are to be considered especially in connection with the first and third principles. How do they stand with regard to their effects on character and with regard to efficiency and economy of effort?

I will make but one observation on the first point. If we go into trade for the purpose of raising church funds, then let it be on the highest possible level. Let us have nothing done which we should condemn in private traders; no tampering with doubtful practices; no resort to expedients which may result in raising money, but *must* result in lowering ideals and in increasing vulgarity, if they do nothing worse. None of our institutions

require such careful watching as these concessions to human weakness, and no amount of enthusiasm or cash raised can compensate for the mischief done, if they are not properly conducted.

(2.) FOR SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

Let us take next the institutions which are formed for promoting social intercourse among the members of our churches, and those which aim at providing recreation more especially for our young people. Of the former, I think too much is often expected. You cannot force friendship. It depends upon other things besides a community of religious sentiment and opinion. But neighbourliness is another matter, and the fact that a man is our neighbour does impose certain duties upon us with regard to him, among others surely that of taking such opportunity as may occur to contribute to the brightness and interest of his life. And who is my neighbour if not the man who year by year worships in my church? The church may well, I think, take cognisance of this duty and provide opportunity for its exercise. But we should be careful lest the idea should grow up that our social intercourse ought to be in any way limited by our religious communion. That way lie narrowness and isolation. I remember once taking some children from our own school to assist at an entertainment in a Methodist school, and being much struck by a remark made to me by one of those who received us, to this effect: "This sort of thing will do good. We can't think alike on all things, but perhaps our children will get to understand each other better." I sometimes think that Unitarians do very much need to understand other people better.

RECREATION.

And now as to recreation in its various forms. The question is often asked, Ought the Church to have anything to do with such matters? I do not propose to argue that question at any length, but simply to state certain propositions, which hold good for myself and determine my answer in the affirmative.

1.—Recreation, amusement of the right kind, is a necessary element in healthy life for all young people, and most old ones also.

2.—It very easily degenerates into something which is not of the right kind, leading often to serious evil.

3.—Religion is not a spiritual and mental exercise unconnected with the rest of life, but is, or ought to be, something which permeates and influences every department of life, raising it all round to a higher level.

From which I conclude that a part of the energy of our churches may very properly be devoted to providing opportunities for recreation of a right kind and under proper conditions, and that a very useful and truly religious work may be done in this way.

Especially do I believe that it is most important to accustom young men and women to meet together socially on a right footing and in a proper way. I have seen how the quiet labours of one good man, devoted for years to the unobtrusive work of a dancing class, have established in a school a tradition of propriety and good taste, which must have been a safeguard to many against the temptation of coarser pleasures. Our first principle comes into play here. Can these recreative institutions be worked so as to conduce not merely to the providing of amusement, but also to the building up of character? They can, and, so worked, may become a valuable expression of the church life. They need, however, to be carefully watched, and to be worked always with a high ideal of taste and conduct in view, not merely with the object of attracting numbers, keeping people together, or providing funds. They afford a valuable opportunity for those who can influence by example, but whose tongues may be slow to teach in the ordinary way. It is not a little service to teach others how to enjoy themselves in a refined and healthy manner, and to show that there is no antagonism between the religious life and innocent amusement.

(3.) FOR EDUCATIONAL WORK.

Let us turn next to educational work, ex-

cluding all purely religious instruction, but with a protest against the narrow sense in which that term is ordinarily used. The time has been when our churches and Sunday-schools were obliged to concern themselves with what is usually understood as purely secular education, when, indeed, it was a truly religious work to do so. How far ought they to attempt such work to-day? Surely not, as a rule, when or where it is being efficiently done by other organisations. There is, however, the case of a few elementary schools, originally started by and since carried on in connection with some of our churches. Provided the work is being properly done in them, on truly unsectarian lines, these ought not to be lightly given up. They have a special value as keeping practically before the world the ideal of what a voluntary school ought to be, and voluntary schools have to be accepted for the present as part of our system. It should, however, be rather the members of the church as individuals than the church as an organisation, that are concerned with these schools. Whatever outside co-operation can be obtained should be welcomed, and constant care should be taken that they do not degenerate into merely denominational schools.

That, however, is an isolated case. Is there any other way in which a church should concern itself with what is commonly called secular education? It depends on the view taken of the object of the education given. It may be regarded merely as qualifying the scholar to hold his own in the battle of life, making him a better workman with hand or head, enabling him to earn a living, and compete successfully with his fellows. Such, I suppose, is mainly the object of what is commonly called technical education. I think that, at any rate in great centres of population, our churches will do well to leave this kind of work to other agencies.

But educational work may have a higher aim than this and may set before itself results which are rather spiritual than material. An enlarged mental horizon, a profounder insight into the mysteries of the universe, a deeper love of truth and a keener appreciation of beauty, and, by means of these, an uplifting of the human spirit into a closer communion with the Divine; these are the highest objects of all education, and there are few subjects which can not be so taught as to promote these objects. The instruction given to the ordinary schools leaves much to be desired from this point of view, and ample scope for supplementary work on the part of the churches—work surely which is truly religious. But in this work we must not try to play an isolated part. It is work to be undertaken for its own sake, and not with any half-hidden design of attracting adherents to our churches. If it is undertaken with such design it will fail, and ought to fail. We must welcome co-operation when possible and be ready to merge our separate efforts in wider undertakings.

Last winter one of the most distinguished Oxford University Extension lecturers lectured in our schoolroom on astronomy to large audiences. The committee who arranged for his course included two Vicars of adjoining parishes, an Independent and a Methodist minister. Their people sat beside ours in earnest attention as the wonders and beauties of the heavens were expounded to them in a noble spirit of reverence and enthusiasm. We are all agreed as to the success of our effort and eagerly looking forward to resuming it next autumn. Such work would have been impossible had there been any attempt to claim the merit of it for our church, or in any way to label it as a denominational undertaking.

(4.) FOR CHARITABLE WORK.

I have left myself but little time to deal with the last class of our allied institutions—the charitable. There should be no need in these days to dwell upon the dangers that attend upon charitable work, especially when connected with a religious organisation, if it be not guided by knowledge and experience. Such bodies as the Charity Organisation Society have thrown a flood of light upon the

principles and methods of true charity. My doubt is whether our churches have sufficiently availed themselves of this light; whether they do not often sin grievously against the principle of efficiency in this matter.

Who can doubt that the relief of suffering in its many forms is a proper and most important part of church work, always provided that by its action the church is not interfering with some other body which would do the work more efficiently. But then we must adopt the best methods with a single eye to the welfare of those whom we aid. "We must look after our own people" is often said. By all means, but for their sake, not with a view to retaining them in connection with our church, or preventing some other church from getting hold of them. If we go on those lines we shall soon find ourselves departing from the wisest and best methods of charity in the attempt to satisfy people who do not know what is really best for them. I am not pleading for any diminution of the amount of charitable work done in connection with our churches. Far from it. Probably in most cases it might well be increased. Probably also, in most cases, it might be placed on a sounder basis and its methods improved. I sometimes think we put too much on the minister in this matter. It is not merely a question of distributing money, with which, indeed, he is generally too scantily supplied. There is as much, perhaps more, good work to be done by advice and suggestion in the crises of life. These, to be valuable, often require behind them an experience of life varied and extensive, such as, in the nature of the case, ministers, in the early part of their career, at any rate, cannot have. The case is only partially met by the district visiting done by ladies. I have sometimes thought that it might be a good thing if in every church there were a small council of the most experienced men and women, pledged to secrecy, to whom any member might apply for advice in times of perplexity and trouble.

In this charitable work, again, there is great need of co-operation with neighbouring churches, especially in times of general distress. An example will best show my meaning. During the great coal strike of some five years ago something like a hundred families were plunged into serious distress in the immediate neighbourhood of my home. Each church began at once with relief work, with the result that some cases were likely to be neglected altogether, while in others a little scheming secured assistance from more than one source. To stop this inefficiency a general committee was formed, upon which the clergyman and ministers and members of various churches took their places under the presidency of a layman. We succeeded to a great extent in stopping private and sectarian action and in checking imposition. We established a common fund, and for weeks worked harmoniously and effectively together, with the result that the distress was more efficiently dealt with and a better understanding and mutual sympathy promoted. Our chief difficulty was in contending with the desire of each church to look specially after its own people—a desire which was not wholly overcome.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I see that much of what I have written resolves itself into a plea for unselfishness and non-exclusiveness in the social and benevolent life of our churches. That is the note upon which I would close. Unselfishness—that is, in working our various allied institutions, let us not look to them merely as methods for aggrandising our churches numerically or financially, but as means for the development of character and the quickening of the higher life. Non-exclusiveness—that we should seek every opportunity of association with other churches and people, and of proving our readiness to join with them in those good works to which we are all called.

The reunion of Christendom is a dream, but the co-operation of churches in Christian work is a practicable ideal, towards the realisation of which we can contribute by the

manner in which we give expression to the social and benevolent life of our churches.

The Rev. HENRY RAWLINGS opened the discussion on the paper. He said that the whole audience must be indebted to Mr. Dendy for the breadth of thought and the balance of mind his paper had displayed. He was in cordial sympathy with its tone and spirit, but the real difficulty began when it was sought to apply the principles laid down. He doubted whether the first institution that had been attacked—the bazaar—could be rightly stigmatised as "the first and worst" of their institutions. He thought that Mr. Dendy had perhaps been somewhat influenced in his denunciation by his own personal aversion, although he (the speaker) assented to the proposition that it would be an excellent thing if there were a greater readiness to submit to direct taxation. As for Mr. Dendy's reference to charitable work, he considered the whole subject fraught with considerable difficulty. There were churches, with clearly defined limits, requiring assent to certain theological propositions, which were therefore able to give guarantees that all the children within their fold should receive a thoroughly good education. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, was able to do this, and the Quakers were in a position to grant adequate means of support for those among them who stumbled on evil days. But with Unitarians the case was different. Their borders were not clearly defined, their numbers, by no means large at the best, varied considerably, and if once they adopted such a plan as that Mr. Dendy seemed to favour they might witness the sorry spectacle of a large influx of people who had come in solely for the sake of the loaves and fishes. There were still large numbers of people, who considered that they had a sort of prescriptive right upon a minister and a church for charitable assistance. They were all too well acquainted with the person whom he might call the "after service beggar." A minister had, perhaps, been preaching about mutual help on a Sunday evening, and then at the close of the service he is approached by a man who gives him an opportunity without any delay of putting into practice that about which he has been so eloquently preaching. They suffered from the traditional idea that ministers could always be putting their hands into their pockets, and as for Mr. Dendy's suggestion for the formation of a small confidential Committee to aid any member of the congregation who might need counsel and friendly help, he thought that this would scarcely be a success. What was wanted was the friendly advice and help of individuals, not of Committees. The best men of the congregation should make friends with those to whom they thought they could be useful, for a word from a friend would be of more avail than the advice of a Committee.

Mr. HODGSON PRATT said he always felt a singular timidity in addressing his friends of the Unitarian Church. He would speak as a sort of an outsider who had been with them in spirit all his life but who had been prevented by circumstances from working within their Church. It would be advantageous for Unitarians if they could on every possible occasion associate themselves with those of other denominations in movements that were not wholly Unitarian but national. He was struck by the remarkable number of

Unitarians who were to be found working in connection with these great movements, but Unitarians as a body must endeavour to go into greater fellowship with men in other Churches, and the object to be achieved was the attaining of wider citizenship. In conclusion, he would make bold to offer his Unitarian friends one word of advice. It was not to forego the substantive for the adjective. He meant that they must not put the word Christianity in an inferior position to the word Unitarianism, for Christianity was the substantive, and Unitarianism must be the adjective.

Mr. TREMAYNE, of Highgate, then related the progress of the University Extension work in Highgate, and said that in no place had the policy of the open door been more fully adopted and with such favourable results.

The Rev. PHILEMON MOORE continued the discussion, and Mr. DENDY briefly replied.

The Rev. W. G. TARRANT then read the following paper by the Rev. Alexander Webster, of Aberdeen, who was prevented by illness from being present:—

OUR CHURCH WORK IN SPREADING RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

The instructions given by Jesus to his disciples may well be regarded as the standing orders of the propagandists of religious truth. The modern missionary can find no better direction, no diviner inspiration than they furnish. They present the fullest Gospel, indicate the most effective methods, and call for the purest enthusiasm. They are the instructions of one accustomed to address multitudes and who had the speaker's highest art and the propagator's richest power. Before he faced men as teacher, Jesus had looked at Nature's methods of propagation, watched the sower and the vine planter, and interested himself in the grain and the grape. He had observed soils and souls, and understood the nature of the good ground for the husbandman and the preacher. In these respects he was the exemplary student and learner. His academy was the hill side, his university the harbour-head. He considered the lilies, watched the children, and studied the masses.

THE FUNCTION OF THE PROPAGANDIST.

According to these sacred instructions the man who goes forth in the spirit of Jesus has to preach, cure, cleanse, exorcise, and revive, or to *preach so as to regenerate*. It is with those who want wholeness that he has to deal. His mission is with the pained in spirit. He has to go to them compassionately.

THE PROPAGANDIST'S WORD.

There is nothing better for the modern preacher to say than "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When he says that, he says all. He may simplify it, amplify it, and specialise it, but he can only declare that "this is God's world. God is present. All the means of life are at hand. Salvation is among you. Truth is around. Heaven is here." The *hereness* of God is the perpetual fact to be set forth for religion's sake. When it is preached, there is true prophecy; when it is realised, religion reigns. The faith of that hereness must shine in the propagandist's face, glow in his word, and be the virtue of his presence.

ADAPTED PROPAGATION.

The world is the same as it was when the instructions of Jesus were given, and human nature is just the same, but there has been a growth of knowledge and a development of life since then. Present conditions have to be considered and operations adapted to them. I speak as a Scotchman having an experience of propagandism exclusively Scottish, and what I say will, therefore, have a local reference and accentuation. But I will not speak of things altogether peculiar to Scotland. I will address myself to what is common to the ground covered by the Association promoting this

meeting. The age is scientific. Its philosophy is evolutionistic. It has new ideas of unity, law, and development. Theology has changed its front and is still changing. The Higher Criticism is proceeding. Dogma is dissolving. A theological sickness affects men. Ecclesiasticism is discounted. The centre of religious gravity has changed. Controversy of the old metaphysical sort is over. The problems burdening the mind are ethical and economic. There is no living concern now regarding the dogma of "three persons in the Godhead." In place of it has come anxiety about the domestic trinity—father, mother, and child, and concern regarding the economic trilogy—rent, profit, and wages. The problems of industry are felt to be closer than those of divinity. The atonement that men are interested in now is not the theological but the social one—the atonement of man with man. Not of Heaven and Hell, with the great gulf fixed between them, do men think so much as of wealth and poverty, with the actual abyss separating. The Church is no longer a sheepfold into which men are driven. The minister has a rival in the magazine. The pulpit has to reckon with the press. Outside the Church, in critical vexation or in bitter animosity, many of the best minds stand. There is a moral enthusiasm in action which has parted company with every Church and with all forms of religion. What has the free, rational propagandist to say and do in these circumstances? He has to realise that he is more needed than ever. It was the religious disease of his day that required the preaching of Jesus. The spiritual sickness of the time calls for the religious rationalist to-day. The doctrinal loosening and drifting give him his opportunity. The time of conscious evolution is his time.

THE ADVOCACY OF SPECIFIC IDEAS.

There are three specific ideas which he is required to advocate.

(1.) *The Universal Evolutionary Activity of God.*—He is entitled to urge that idea as a positive philosophy. Science attests the universality of the power working through Nature, moulding man, and Conscience clothes that power with Fatherhood. The orthodox preacher speaks of the Fatherhood of God, but always with a limit. He makes it apply to the "elect" and "believers" only, and says it ends with the grave for others. The Unitarian propagandist has to present the idea in its full universality. That is his specific work. There is no other ready to declare—

"Free as the sun and air it is
Of latitudes and boundaries."

He will be charged with asserting an "exaggerated doctrine of God's Fatherhood," but he must in no wise narrow or obscure the idea. The dawning religion needs its exhilarating influence. The faith of it is required to regenerate spiritual life. It is the treasure which he has to carry out to men.

(2.) *The Humanity of Jesus.*—The propagator of rational religion has to affirm the natural humanity of Jesus. That affirmation is needed to protect the unity of God and secure the directness of religious worship. No orthodox propagandist holds this idea in its simplicity. The popular preacher affirms the humanity of Jesus, but confusingly adds the dogma of Deity. He lays more emphasis than he used to do on the humanity, but he none the less magnifies the idea of deificity. Indeed, he asserts that the Deity of Jesus was settled in theology long ago and never again can be touched, as if Augustine and Calvin were absolute assessors of belief. He admits that the humanity of Jesus opens up "a great field which able and thoughtful men are now exploring," but gives no credit to the pioneers of that field. It is laid upon the rationalistic preacher to make it clear that there is an infinite distinction between God and Jesus—a distinction, however, which does not dissolve their oneness in spirit, nor, while exalting one to supreme place, derogate from the honour due to the other as Son of Man.

(3.) *The Character of the Bible.*—With regard to that the modern propagandist of

religious truth has to declare that the writings composing the Bible are selections made from the remnant of a national literature, and to assert the right of reason to revise the selection and put its own value on the words of Scripture. In this connection he has to affirm that the living sphere of God's revelation is the Universe, and that the human mind itself in its intelligence is the organ of God's inspiration. He has to exalt the soul above a book and teach men that religion arises from the sanctification of personal faculty, not from belief in texts of Scripture.

THE SCOPE OF PROPAGANDISM.

Here we may well revert to the standing orders. "Go ye into all the world" is the enlarged instruction. Cities, towns, villages, and houses are specified as places to be gone to. A broadcast universalism is the thing proposed. There is an impression among us that the places most suitable for purposes of propagation are the larger towns and cities. My experience as lecturer in twelve different shires warrants my putting in a plea for villages. Some of my largest and most receptive audiences were got in villages of less than 2,000 inhabitants. You get the only hall there is and have the field to yourself, and if you can fetch the people with your subject, you will have the best of the place to hear you. You may be cut out of an audience by the device of an aroused ecclesiastic, who wishes to protect his preserves against you, but the chances are in your favour. The distractions in a large town are many. Advertising there is expensive and unsure, and the most severe disappointments are experienced in the city. For occasional lectures, I have a decided preference for the smaller places; of course, for settled work the larger places are best.

HOUSE VISITATION.

By those who have time for house visitation many "worthy" houses would be found. A "Zaccheus" here and a "Mary" there would welcome the visitor. Women of leisure might well take up this domestic work. The leaving of a pamphlet, and a few minutes' conversation will bear fruit. I wish to avoid making fanciful suggestions, and yet I am moved to say that much good

SUMMER WORK

might be done by the propagandist who is a cyclist. In the afternoon he might ride out to a village and deliver two or three hundred pamphlets, and hold a meeting in the evening at the cross, or wherever he can get a stand. For that sort of work we have to drop starch and conventionalism, and go to the people, as we most readily can, where they live. The primitive disciples were open-air men, and had no "cloth" to think of. The apostle with his "bike" need take no money in his wallet nor salute any man by the way! I may shock you if, with outlying places in my mind, I suggest

A VAN OF THE FREE FAITH,

but I think the suggestion should be considered. It would be a travelling church and manse in one, and a minister and his wife could go together in a very useful way. A relay of van apostles might easily be obtained who would find good recreation in such work. If that is not quite apostolic, it may be considered patriarchal and so be blest. I am here reminded of the prohibition in the standing orders. There is a "Go not" in them which being translated into its modern equivalent would be "Go not among the bigoted, the exclusive, the dogmatic; enter not among the egotistic, the esoteric, the eccentric, but keep among the open-minded and movable and those whom Walt Whitman calls 'powerful uneducated persons.'" They who deem themselves whole scorn the physician. You have to find the sick, discern the suffering, discover the inquiring, and address yourself to them. These are not to be found everywhere. As a rule, you may pass by the university and take your stand by the factory. The cathedral bell will not ring for your meeting; all that you may do at the library is to leave your periodical and go; but there's a shed at the docks where you will get a hearing, and a

corner of the cross where you will find ailing men. I do not see why sympathetic laymen should not make a practice of conversing with groups of men in simple but earnest fashion on matters pertaining to religion. I warmly advocate

OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

I wonder that more of our ministers do not try it. They don't know the good it would do them to lay gown and MS. aside and stand up in some open place and speak directly to whosoever comes. If it is not yet respectable, make it so. You need not be afraid of your throat; mine has not troubled me an hour, and I have spoken every year for eighteen years, three months in the year, on Sunday evenings, with a great many week-night addresses thrown in. The tongue enjoys the freedom of the open air, and the voice gets the confidence of ozone; and for one who will go to hear you in church you will have ten to speak to outside. You have to be prepared for a great nervous strain and take means of repair. Thousands go to the parks and the beach on Sunday evenings: follow them thither. Take a harmonium with you, coax your choir out, start your service, lift up your voice and you will find many will hear you gladly. Take up your collection as you are entitled to do, for the labourer is worthy of his reward. You will find your church and your own soul recruited by that work. Before I come to the question of how the propagandist should deliver himself I have to say that

PROPAGANDISM SHOULD BE EDUCATIVE.

The propagandist should not go forth as a belligerent but as a carrier of good tidings. He is an agent of evolution. He does not approach a town to level but to lighten it. He speaks not to assail, but to inform. He offers material for assimilation rather than presents points of antagonism. His statements may call forth opposition, but it is not his business to provoke controversy. In other days I have gone forth in war paint and with controversial weapons, but that way does not commend itself to me now. Proselytising is not propagation. I do not care merely to change a man's belief about Christ: what I seek is to open his soul to the infinite and let it find its own portion in God. Religion is not a creed but a character; it does not come by dictation but by development; it is not the result of controversy but of aspiration. Our work is to evolve, not to fight. We are not the champions of a sect, we are the indicators of a tendency, the instruments of a movement, the exponents of a principle. If we are but a section, the fault is not ours. We do not wish to be a sect, however large or influential. Distinctive principles we have, but we disown the sectarian spirit. We bear a name, but not as a dogma; it is simply the sign of our thought, the symbol of our ideal. In the day of his young enthusiasm the apostle may expect to find the demons subject to him, and even to see "Satan fall like lightning from Heaven," but his later judgment will tell him that the making of converts and the building up of a denomination is not what he should undertake; that his work is for general expansion of mind and the helping up of religious thought above superstition and selfishness. "No complex, no very important truth was ever transferred in full development from one mind to another—truth of that kind is not a piece of furniture to be shifted, it is a seed which must be sown and pass through the several stages of growth." I do not expect to see many Unitarian Churches in Scotland, but I do expect to see, and actually do see, many churches becoming Unitarian in their way of thinking and worshipping. It is as a leaven that the propagandist has to go forth. The one thing needed in his word is *vitality*. It must be *live* in the sense of being timely, fresh, and in sympathy with the spiritual needs of the hour. He must know what is going on in the world, what men are discovering, thinking, and suffering. He must deal with the problems troubling men. Orthodoxy is before us, and in order to make our position clear we require to compare and contrast our ideas with those it presents. That requires skill. But there is

a prejudice against us, a misconception of our ideas and intentions fostered by sectarian training: how can we get a hearing? We have to take the people where they are in their reading and groping, their wandering and suffering. Let the book of the hour determine the form of your subject and be your introducer. Take your cue from the topic which is being commonly discussed. There need be no subterfuge, but only the art of propagation. Suppose you wish to speak of the problem of evil: you need not expect to awaken any interest if you announce a lecture on "The Scriptural Teaching regarding the Evil One," but you may hope to have a large audience if you advertise your subject as "The Sorrows of Satan: An Exposition and Criticism of Marie Corelli's Story." The story has been read and talked about, and people are interested in the questions it raises. Or if you wish to speak on the question "What is a Christian?" you need not look for a crowd by announcing that you will expound the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount, in the Moulders Hall, Back-street. But you may take the Town Hall for a lecture on Hall Caine's book "The Christian" in the faith that you will have a good attendance. It is not necessary for your educative purpose that you should always make a formal statement of Unitarian theology; you are there with a spirit rather than with a form, with a principle and a pathway rather than with a set of doctrines. There need be no disguise, but there should not be waving of the red flag of controversy. People have a literary and an ethical interest in religious questions while they have no dogmatic interest, and the literary and ethical sides are the most open to light and truth.

PROPAGATION BY PAMPHLET.

This is a means of propaganda which should be raised to an art. A pamphlet with a striking title, skilfully written and well printed, will at once interest, and thousands of readers may be reached in this way that would not be found by lectures. I have an impression that we could do something effective in the form of

RATIONAL RELIGIOUS STORIES.

If we could get such stories as "Robert Elsmere," "John Ward, Preacher," "A Singular Life," put into booklets and circulated widely, they would help religion mightily. In this connection I may say I think there is a ready field for a travelling pamphlet or bookstall in charge of an energetic man. If such were set up in any of our thoroughfares, hundreds of penny pamphlets and booklets would be sold every day. We have not used the Press enough in this way; and our books are too dear and too deep for the average reader.

I have said I look more to the coming of churches up to our standard than to the raising of churches of our own, but still I think there is room for an immediate need of

A CHURCH-BUILDING MOVEMENT.

We should have a large church-building fund. In every new and growing district of a city a church should be planted. A free church, well appointed, and with a living ministry would attract thoughtful people. I have said nothing about the ordinary work of the particular church, not because I think there is no special importance in it, but because I wanted to speak of the more outlying and neglected things. Had time permitted I might have spoken of the function of the ordinary church services in the promotion of religious truth, and of the importance of the weekly communion of souls in worship. I might have expressed my feeling in favour of ministers being encouraged by their congregations to be really alive, in touch with the science, the economics, the politics, and the literature of the day, and, above all, in hearty sympathy with every ameliorative and ascending movement. I would have said something about the Sunday-school, the guild, and other institutions for the sake of the young, but my time is done. I can but say now that, in our various spheres and with our diversities of operations, we have to stand for religion in the broadest sense, as comprehend-

ing all the sanctities of bodily and spiritual life; every church being a centre of educational activity, a home for all who feel the obligations of brotherhood, a place of joy for the strong minded, and a sanctuary for those who are nigh unto moral death. And while there is this church work, with its consecrated ministry and its holy laity, there must be for the sake of it a home work, a warehouse work, a factory work, a private, personal conscience work, all permeated with an earnestness for the true. Without such individual and collective holiness the church is a sham, and our profession of religion is hypocrisy.

The Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, before dealing with Mr. Webster's paper, said he disagreed with some of the President's remarks. To discuss the duties of the Church with regard to spreading the truth they must know what the attitude was. He thought the President had misinterpreted a little the true nature of the Church on which he had laid so much stress. To him he thought it made all the difference in the world, that his contract with his people was to think as truly as he could, and to give expression to that thought. It was quite true that any idea of sudden divergence would only lead to a severance. It was when spiritual and moral sympathy ceased with the people that it was honourable on the part of the minister to depart from the pulpit. It might arise, however, that the minister in the course of his metaphysical studies might come to some doctrine more akin to Trinitarianism than Unitarianism, and he might give utterance to it, but at the same time the congregation might not want to separate themselves from him, his contract being to think as truly as he could and to give utterance to it. With regard to Mr. Webster's paper that gentleman had been setting a splendid example in this respect in Scotland in the propagation of missionary work, and could therefore speak with the highest authority. With all these suggestions he entirely agreed. He thought all the things that he suggested from the bicycle to the van were admirable, and he would like to see them carried out. With regard to the spirit of propagandism, there had been much discussion, and a little misunderstanding, and they ought to understand a little what that was which underlay the position of those who objected to this kind of work in connection with the churches. There had been great hurlers of texts in the past, which texts had been hurled from side to side without doing anybody any intellectual or theological good whatever. Those were now of the past, but at the same time there was amongst them a spirit which looked upon any Trinitarian as necessarily foolish. There was an ignorant and pugnacious way of putting forward the Unitarian faith. There was a way of flaunting the flag in the face of the enemy, and there was the intellectual pride which was generally most widespread where it was least justified. It was from all such temper that he would say with other friends "Good Lord deliver us." What was wanted was a common united sympathetic understanding, and to feel that the orthodox doctrine had grown up, even though it might have been through cajolery and priestcraft—much more largely through genuine demands of the human mind. What Unitarians should consider was the way in which the Orthodox Church had satisfied those demands. The growth of the Orthodox

Church, and its working, should be thoroughly understood. Mr. Webster had said that there was no living concern in the discussion of the Trinity. Some seemed to think that the whole of the business of the Trinity was going to be settled in three minutes, but he noticed that his neighbour, Dr. Watson, seemed to think that it had been settled long ago, and settled adversely long ago, to the Unitarian views. That matter had not received so much attention of late owing to the leaders having risen into another atmosphere. But amongst the rank and file those doctrines had a great hold, who still had to be taught to know God as a Father, Christ as a brother, and that love of humanity would melt away all hardness of heart.

Mr. GRAHAM (Glasgow) contended that it was necessary that the latent fire in the hearts of men should be aroused by applying the spiritual love of human beings. When that was done the spiritual life would be forthcoming.

The Rev. J. HOCART, of Brussels, said that he found it difficult to express his feelings before an English audience because words would not come easily. But he wished to say how much he recognised the feelings of solidarity that obtained among all Unitarians and said that his audience would be gratified to know that their doctrines were daily gaining ground in Belgium.

Dr. BROOKE HERFORD said bearing in mind the rule which had been passed at the meeting held the previous evening, he had taken advantage of it and had understood that he would not be called upon to take any further action until Monday. However, whilst listening to Mr. Webster's paper in that irresponsible position it raised in him memories of when he first began speaking and preaching out of doors. The first sermon that he had ever preached was out of doors. It was at the village green at Galgate, near Lancaster. Other memories of such preaching came back to him, and he was certain that it did the preacher good. It forced a man to look his hearers in the face, and to speak simply and directly to them. He gave up that work of outdoor preaching because for the main part the English people had been raised up to the level that they were accustomed to go to meetings in halls and rooms. He had watched with a great deal of interest the work of the Salvationists and other bodies in Hampstead, who held outdoor meetings to try to gather the sinners in, and he confessed that he could see very little in street preaching now. The thing for which he hungered and thirsted was to give Christianity its true place in the world and make it a help and a joy to men. That was the inspiration of the Unitarian propaganda in the past and would be still.

Mr. EDWIN ELLIS moved, and Mr. E. C. HARDING seconded, a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers, and the President was thanked for his services in the chair.

CONVERSAZIONE.

On Thursday evening the President and Mrs. Grosvenor Lee received the members and friends at the Gallery of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. The Effra

(Brixton) Amateur String Orchestra provided the music, and the very pleasant gathering of friends brought a most successful series of meetings to a close.

CENTRAL POSTAL MISSION AND UNITARIAN WORKERS' UNION.

The annual meeting of this Society was held on Wednesday afternoon at Essex Hall. The chair was taken by Miss Harriet Johnson, of Liverpool, in the absence of Mrs. Manning, who was prevented by illness from being present.

Miss HILL, the hon. secretary, read a letter from Mr. William Tate resigning his office as treasurer, and on the motion of Miss PRESTON, seconded by Lady WILSON and supported by Miss TAGART, a motion was passed, acknowledging, in the warmest terms of gratitude, Mr. Tate's services to the Society, and expressing deep sympathy with him in his illness.

Miss HILL then read extracts from the Committee's report, which was for nine months only, from March to December, 1897, as they wished to make their reports in future coincide with their financial year.

The report stated that the roll of members had now reached 268 and was steadily increasing. No less than 50 new members were enrolled at the Grindelwald excursion, and several Postal Mission correspondents had joined. The successful meeting held in connection with the Triennial Conference at Sheffield in April, 1897, had helped to popularise their cause. The Hope-street Church Women's Congregational Union had since been formed, the object being "The broadening and enlarging of the sympathies of members both in their faith and in the work and interests of their fellow-members. The hope that in the future their united action may assist struggling congregations and individuals." The Workers' Union included 27 societies in all. The iron chapel at Bedford, built by means of the Society, continued to prosper. The little congregation was consolidating and was active in worship and good works. The villagers occasionally conducted services themselves, when their minister was otherwise occupied. The Committee desired to put Bedford on a firmer footing, and to aid the neighbouring chapel at Framlingham. After consultation with the B. and F.U.A., the Eastern Union and the Framlingham Trustees, they decided to raise a special fund, *The Suffolk Village Mission Fund*, to guarantee an adequate stipend to the minister and to provide necessary working expenses for both chapels. In this effort they had the sympathy of the Revs. Dr. Martineau and Stopford Brooke, and had already received generous promises of help. During the past winter special Sunday evening services had been held at Framlingham, and this effort it was hoped steadily to continue. The regular Postal Mission work had been continued, but less advertising had been done; more time had been given to old correspondents and sending out books on loan. Gifts of books had been received from several friends. The Committee were much indebted to Miss F. E. Cooke for preparing a leaflet on "Reading Circles," with a list of books added, which the C.P. Mission was prepared to lend.

The accounts showed that the year had opened with a balance of £11 4s. 9d. in hand; £78 4s. had been received in subscriptions, £34 18s. in donations, and £3 6s. 1d. from eighty-eight correspondents. The expenses had been £106 13s. 11½d., leaving a balance of £29 11s. 2½d. in hand, but it was noted that more than double the previous outlay would be needed for Framlingham. The very successful Grindelwald excursion had left the astonishing surplus of £77 17s. 7d., showing what co-operation could accomplish when judiciously organised.

The Rev. A. E. O'CONNOR moved the adoption of the report, and described the good response there had been to their efforts in the North of Ireland at the time when the Belfast Unitarian Society conducted a Postal Mission. Miss LUCAS seconded the motion, and Miss EVANS of Manchester, the Rev. J. ELLIS, and Mrs. LEWIS spoke of the work of the Missions with which they were each connected. Mr. ELLIS described the success of the reading circles they had established in Sheffield. Miss JOHNSON also spoke of some aspects of the work. Miss LAWRENCE, who has undertaken to act temporarily as treasurer, referred to the work at Framlingham, and thought that the growth of their village mission was an almost unique kind of work. It proved that the villagers were ready for our message, and she was much impressed by their earnestness. She moved a vote of thanks to the B. and F.U.A., the Eastern Union and the Framlingham Trustees for their help in the effort.

Miss TAGART seconded the motion, and strongly urged that the duty they felt in connection with domestic missions in large towns should be extended to their village population. Their worship was not a ceremonial worship; their only sacrifice was the real sacrifices they had to make for the population about their chapels. It would be matter of very great regret to her if any one of their old chapels, with their sacred associations, did fail in the future to provide homes for the people. The chapels should not be closed all the week through; they ought to become true homes. For that reason she had purchased the building at Battle. They must not lose their old buildings, and if they could not be used for religious worship, they could be made to serve for the instruction and benefit of the neighbourhood. Such work was needed all over the country. Even if they could close all the public-houses, they could not force people into temperance; they must give them something else—they must make their chapels centres of life and uplifting for the people.

The Rev. W. JELLIE acknowledged the vote on behalf of the Eastern Union. On the motion of Mr. H. BLESSLEY, seconded by Mrs. H. S. SOLLY, the officers and committee were appointed, and a vote of thanks to Miss Johnson for presiding, moved by the Rev. V. D. DAVIS, concluded the meeting.

PRESENTATION TO THE REV. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

On Wednesday evening at six o'clock a meeting was held in the Council Room at Essex Hall for the purpose of presenting a testimonial to the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., the late Editor of *THE INQUIRER*. The chair was taken by Sir Philip Manfield, who said that they had come together to make that presentation to Mr. Tarrant in the same spirit in which he had given himself to the work of the paper. They wished to testify in some public manner and let him know how his labours were appreciated. Of the labours of ten years it was difficult to speak in a few minutes, but they were deeply grateful to Mr. Tarrant, and their best wishes went with him.

The Rev. J. E. CARPENTER then made the presentation, on behalf of a number of friends, of an album and address with the

names of 120 contributors, including the name most honoured among them, that of Dr. Martineau, together with a timepiece and a cheque for 250 guineas. Mr. Carpenter referred to the past history of THE INQUIRER and some of the honoured names that had been connected with it, and humorously described what an Editor was expected to be and do. He paid a warm tribute to the capacity and devotion of Mr. Tarrant, and to the patient and genial spirit in which he had faced all the difficulties of his task, and concluded by reading the address, which ran as follows:—

TO THE REV. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

Dear Mr. Tarrant,—On behalf of the Friends whose names are appended, we have much pleasure in asking your acceptance of the accompanying purse and timepiece in grateful acknowledgment of your services as Editor of THE INQUIRER for the ten years ending at Christmas last. During that period many important questions have arisen which naturally gave rise to differences of opinion, and it was therefore specially important that the editorial chair should be occupied by one who combined with wide intelligence and clear convictions fairness of mind and a generous tone in controversy. It cannot but be a cause of rejoicing to you on your retirement to know that the circulation and influence of the journal under your guidance have steadily increased, and that you have gained the personal regard of so large a circle of friends.

Our regret at losing you as Editor is qualified by the knowledge that your devotion to the work of the ministry in which also you have achieved so much success, will find freer scope now that you are released from other duties.

Trusting that you may long be spared to minister not only to your deeply attached congregation, but also to our religious community at large, and with best wishes for your happiness and prosperity,—We are, yours very sincerely,

(Signed) J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.
THOS. GROSVENOR LEE.
PHILIP MANFIELD.
DAVID MARTINEAU.
F. NETTLEFOLD.
E. CLEPHAN, Treasurer.
JAMES HARWOOD, Hon. Sec.

London, June 1, 1898.

The Rev. W. G. TARRANT, in acknowledging the presentation, said they would understand that he found it very difficult to say much at that time. When he was asked to consent to receive those very handsome gifts at a time when many friends would be present he naturally shrank from it; but at the same time he felt there was another than the personal side to the matter: there was the question of the paper to which he had been attached for so long. He then spoke of the past years and his experience as Editor, the greatness of the opportunity, and the happiness he had found in giving himself to that work. He concluded by warmly thanking the friends who had joined in those gifts.

The Rev. T. L. MARSHALL then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and expressed his pleasure in taking part in that meeting, as one so long connected with THE INQUIRER and thinking very highly of Mr. Tarrant's work.

The motion was seconded by Mr. DAVID MARTINEAU, who spoke on behalf

of the Directors of THE INQUIRER Company, and supported by Mr. P. W. CLAYDEN and the Rev. J. HARWOOD, who mentioned that several friends had told him they would have been glad, had they known of it, to join in the gift, so that he was ready to receive further contributions, and a further cheque would, in due time, be sent to Mr. Tarrant.

Sir PHILIP MANFIELD having responded, the meeting ended.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents. LETTERS CANNOT BE INSERTED WITHOUT THE WRITER'S NAME; and all private information should be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.]

TRAINING COLLEGES FOR TEACHERS.

SIR,—Let me trouble you with a very brief note, in order most earnestly to accentuate Mr. Bowie's appeal, in your last issue, as to the need of a larger provision of efficient training colleges for pupil-teachers from the Elementary schools without sectarian bias.

As your correspondent urges in forcible terms, the present position of affairs is a serious scandal; and no effort ought to be spared, on the part of friends of the Board and other undenominational schools, to remedy the evil. No Queen's scholar should be debarred from the advantage of entering a training college for want of accommodation; and every new college must be founded upon a perfectly free theological basis.

Here is a single illustration of the present difficulty. A short time ago a pupil-teacher belonging to the Taunton Memorial Schools was "confirmed" into the Church of England as a requisite preliminary to entering a training college not too far away from home, although her parents were avowed Wesleyans, and though she had even formerly been a pupil in the Mary-street Chapel Sunday-schools. I regretted her action, but I realised the temptation. An elder brother had previously taken a like course; but his term as a pupil-teacher had been passed in a Church of England school.

As a member for the last seven years of the Somerset County Education Committee, I find myself constantly on the watch as to matters that may concern the consciences of those brought within the jurisdiction of the Committee. But this question of training colleges for Elementary school teachers is in other hands; and, again, I crave careful heed to Mr. Bowie's letter.

JEFFERY WORTHINGTON.

Sherford, Taunton, May 24.

SIR,—Let me confirm what Mr. Bowie says from our experience in Bridport. Here we have large and flourishing undenominational day schools, supported alike by Churchmen and Nonconformists. The master and mistresses not unfrequently desire to keep as pupil-teachers scholars attending our own Sunday-school, and most of the remaining pupil-teachers are supplied from the other Nonconformist chapels, as the National school absorbs those supplied from the Established Church. All goes well until they pass the Queen's Scholarship Examina-

tion. Then, on the day when the list comes out assigning them their places in order of merit, there is feverish telegraphing to and fro, seeking admittance into a Training College. No young man has a chance of admission into Borough-road, the only undenominational college for him in England, unless he is among the first two hundred on the list, and it is nearly as hard to get into Bangor. He considers himself fortunate if he is admitted into a Church Training College under the condition, as the telegram tersely states, that *he becomes a Churchman*. I could give more definite particulars, but they would be needlessly painful. This is one way in which they make Churchmen.

H. SHAEN SOLLY.

Bridport, May 24.

THE annual meeting of the Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers was held at the Sunday School Union House, 56, Old Bailey, on Tuesday, May 31, Mr. T. Wilson, B.A., in the chair. The report shows that since the last annual meeting £995 have been distributed among seventy-seven aged and infirm ministers—a sum exceeding all previous annual distributions, and considerably in excess of the actual income for the year. The treasurer is Mr. P. Cadby, 24, St. Peter's-square, Hammersmith, W.; the secretary, the Rev. P. G. Scorey, Gibbons House, Billingshurst, Sussex.

THE week's Obituary includes the following:—Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart., a contemporary of Mr. Gladstone's, who entered Parliament in 1837.—Mr. Adam W. Black, a member of the Edinburgh firm of publishers, and latterly a member of the Paddington Vestry.—Mr. Abel Smith, member of Parliament for East Herts.—Lord Playfair (Lyon Playfair), a distinguished scientist, who held many public appointments, and in 1856 became Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh. He represented the Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities in Parliament, and was Postmaster-General in one of Mr. Gladstone's Ministries.—Sir Robert Rawlinson, K.C.B., a distinguished sanitary engineer.

COUNTRY AIR FOR WEAK AND AILING CHILDREN.—Miss A. J. Lawrence, 75, Lancaster-gate, London, W., begs to acknowledge, with many thanks, receipt for this fund the following sums:—Mrs. W. G. Harrison, £2 2s.; Miss Stainbank, 10s.; E. S., 10s.; Mrs. C. E. Hudson, 10s.; Sir John Robinson, £2 2s.; Mrs. Holt, £2 2s.; Mrs. Chorlton, 10s.; Miss Short, 10s.; Mrs. Bayle Bernard, £1.

EPPS'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected COCOA, Mr. Epps has provided for our breakfast and supper a delicately flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—*Civil Service Gazette*.—Made simply with boiling water or milk.—Sold only in packets and pound tins, by Grocers, labelled —"JAMES EPPS and Co., Ltd., Homoeopathic Chemists, London."

OBITUARY.

MR. JESSE FAGG.

THE Free Christian Church at Croydon has sustained a severe loss by the passing away, on May 25, of Mr. Jesse Fagg, at the age of seventy years.

The deceased gentleman was one of an earnest band, who, in 1870, successfully started the cause of free religious worship and teaching in Croydon, and in 1881, during his fifteen years' service as treasurer of the congregation, was largely instrumental in raising the funds required to build the present church.

Respected and esteemed by all who knew him, he was ever ready with counsel and assistance in the cause he had so thoroughly at heart, and those who were brought most closely in contact with him best knew his worth. In addition to his church and other useful work in Croydon, he was for some years a member of the Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

Preaching a sermon appropriate to the occasion on Sunday, the Rev. J. Page Hopps said that though it was not his habit to detail the virtues of departed friends, he could not but remind the congregation that in Mr. Jesse Fagg they had lost a long-trying, faithful and devoted friend and helper.

MR. W. L. MATTHEWS.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. W. L. Matthews, of Bridport, on the 20th ult. Mr. Matthews belonged to one of the Unitarian families of Birmingham, his grandfather having become a member of Dr. Priestley's congregation in 1788, and having married first a Miss Bache and subsequently a Miss Ann Carpenter, aunt to Mary Carpenter. In 1864, Mr. W. L. Matthews settled in Bridport as a watchmaker and jeweller, becoming a staunch supporter of our chapel there. He had a remarkable talent as a reciter, and gave valuable aid to the Mutual Improvement Society, as well as to other institutions connected with the chapel and Sunday-school. In the town he was an active member for many years of the Burial Board, and was on the Committee of the Literary and Scientific Institution, and on the Regatta Committee. At the time of his death, too, he held the office of Worshipful Master of the St. Mary Lodge of Freemasons. The attendance at his funeral on the 24th ult. testified to the universal esteem in which he was held in the town, and at a congregational meeting a vote of sympathy with his sons was passed by his fellow-worshippers.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

[TO PUBLISHERS.—All Books, &c., sent to THE INQUIRER will be acknowledged under this head, with name of publisher and price, if supplied. The necessities of our space, however, compel us to limit the number selected for critical notice and review.]

The Making of Religion. By Andrew Lang. 12s. (Longmans.)

St. Nicholas, Magazine of Art, Family Magazine, Church of England, Contemporary Review, Nineteenth Century, The Century, Macmillan's, Young Days.

THE CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

ON Good Friday I was reading the story of the last hours of Jesus on earth, in Matthew xxvi., and amongst all that is so sad and terrible there two little sentences seemed to me saddest of all. One was where Judas led on the Jews into the quiet garden at night, where Jesus had been praying, with his disciples close by, and when the soldiers seized Jesus and took him away. The words are only these, "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled."

What could be more sad and lonely? Peter afterwards "followed afar off," and went in to the High Priest's palace "to see the end"; but what happened there? I am sure you know, but, if you forget, read Matthew xxvi. from v. 57 to the end.

How grievously Jesus must have felt being deserted by his closest friends—those who had been with him day by day, as he wandered over the country teaching and comforting and helping the people. He thought they loved him truly, though he knew that some were weak: "the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." They thought they loved him truly, and they had no idea that they were weak. But after the dark hour of trial and temptation they must have bitterly learned that they were not only weak, but cowardly. They left him alone to face cruel men filled with rage, and a trial before the High Priest that was no true trial, as all knew how it must end. Where was their true love now? Buried under the weight of their fears; they thought of themselves, and not of their Master. No story tells us what they felt afterwards, except Judas, and poor Peter who "went out and wept bitterly"; but cannot we guess? "They all forsook him and fled." To have that told of them whenever this story was told, for hundreds of years afterwards! And to think that they might have saved Jesus that terrible feeling of loneliness and desertion, and that they did not. The chance was gone, never to return. That door was shut, never to be opened again.

How often since those days have men caused the same sort of feeling in the hearts of others; and often without repenting it at all. Think of the martyrs, who were put to terrible and lingering deaths, or to tortures far worse than death—and who seemed to be deserted by all human help and sympathy, and left to bear their agony alone. Does it not seem awful that men should have the power to make others suffer like that?

But, in smaller ways, do we not often desert our companions when a time of trial comes, and leave them to face trials alone, when sympathy and companionship would have made all the difference? Even in little things, such as ridicule, we join in the laugh against them, and leave them with the bitter smart and sting unrelieved, which a kind word or look might have taken quite away.

Amongst the silver mines in Hungary a boy named Michael got work as a miner. His father had been disabled by a bad accident, and Michael, helped a little by his young brother George, had to support them all, including a little deaf and dumb sister. One day, while hammering the walls of the mine for ore, Michael came on a soft place where the wall made a different sound; and on scratching away the soft earth and rubbish he made a hole through

to some space beyond: on looking through he found that he had come upon an unknown chamber in the mine, which must have been worked long ago and blocked up. He crept in, and found the walls all glistening with silver. He was nearly mad with joy; for whoever found a new branch of the mine received a large reward; and they were terribly poor at home. He closed the hole with a stone, left his tools to mark the place, and flew through the long passages to tell the inspector. As he passed his companions working he cried out in his joy "I have found a mine!"

He found it difficult to make the inspector believe his tale, but at last persuaded him to come and see: and when they reached the place where Michael's tools were, and he said "There!" they in vain examined everywhere, and there was no sign of the opening. Michael was overcome with grief and dismay, and scarcely even heard the scolding of the inspector or the ridicule and taunts of his companions.

Day after day he searched again, but without success; but one day he stayed for another search after work hours. As he wandered through the quiet passages he heard the sound of voices, and on following the sounds he discovered the hole into the very place which he had found before, and saw six men inside helping themselves to the silver. In stretching forward as far as he dared to see who they were his lamp grated on the wall and fell, and he was discovered. They dragged him in, called him a "wretch of a spy," abused him, and ordered him to swear not to tell. But he resolutely refused: then they offered him a share if he would keep silent and join them; but this also he indignantly refused. Then they told him that if he would not join them they should leave him there, and build him in to die there. Michael cried and sobbed; but they gathered up their tools and went; they built up the hole with great heavy stones, which it was impossible for Michael to stir!

Not a soul to help him! No pity to be had! Fancy his desolation. "Is it true that I am to die in this place?" he said. "I cannot believe it. Yet if I am to die, it is better than to be a thief; and I shall go to heaven and see my own dear mother." And it was neighbours and companions who had thus deserted him!

He noticed that he had his lamp left, but it would soon go out, and before that he must examine everywhere for a chance of escape. He found a piece of rock which he used as a hammer, hitting the rock, and listening to the sound. At last—oh! joy—he came upon a soft substance; and through rubbish and dust which had accumulated for years, Michael found a small opening near the floor. Working for dear life he scraped away the rubbish and crept further and further through, and after hours of labour he stood upright at the bottom of a dry, disused well at the opposite side of the mountain, with the stars shining over his head. He made himself heard the next day, and was taken out, and reached his home. And he received the reward for his mine, and the family were raised out of their poverty. There is much more in the story than I can tell here; and you had better get it to read. It is called "Michael the Miner," and is by Mary Howitt. "They all forsook him and fled" was indeed true of Michael; but his desolation had a happy ending.

GERTRUDE MARTINEAU.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

[Notices and Reports for this Department should be as brief as possible, and be sent in by Thursday Morning.]

Bolton District Sunday School Union.—The united scholars' services in connection with the union were held on Whit-Sunday in the chapels at Bank-street, Bolton, and Chowbent. At Bolton the service was conducted by the Rev. S. Thompson, of Rivington, and Mr. T. H. Gordon, B.A., of Dukinfield, delivered the address. The service at Chowbent was conducted by the Rev. J. E. Stead, of Park-lane, and Miss Dendy, of Manchester, gave an address. Collections were made on behalf of the funds of the Union.

Bridport.—Last Saturday, at the same hour as the service was being conducted in Westminster Abbey, a joint memorial service for Mr. Gladstone was held here in the Congregational Chapel. Taking part in it were the Congregational, the Wesleyan, and the Unitarian ministers, as well as a representative of the Society of Friends, and the congregation, which fairly filled a spacious chapel, included adherents of almost every denomination in the town.

Bury: Lancashire.—On Saturday afternoon, May 28, a united service, in memory of Mr. Gladstone, was held under the auspices of the Bury Nonconformist Council (of which the minister and warden of Bank-street Chapel are members), in the largest Nonconformist chapel in the town, belonging to the United Methodist Free Church. Two thousand persons were present. Introductory passages of Scripture were read by a Congregationalist minister, the president of the Council; prayer was offered by a Baptist; the lesson was read by the Rev. J. Collins Odgers; and the address was delivered by the oldest U.M.F.C. minister in the town. A similar united service on the same day was held close by at Heywood, in a U.M.F.C. chapel, in which the Rev. T. B. Evans took part.

Horsham.—One hundred and twenty-fifth Whit-Sunday anniversary. On Sunday last the annual gathering was once again held, when, as usual, friends assembled from far and near. The sermons were preached by the Rev. Frank K. Freeston, of Essex Church, whose morning subject was "Glory in the Church," and evening, "The Universal Pentecost." The chapel was prettily decorated with pot and cut flowers; the luncheon and tea were provided by the usual capable hands. Collections were taken after each service, to be divided between the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Provincial Assembly.

Hunslet.—On Sunday, May 22, the school sermons were preached here by the Rev. E. Ceredig Jones, M.A., of Bradford, when good congregations assembled, and special hymns and anthems were sung. The collections were in advance of the last two years. On Sunday, May 29, the Rev. J. Fox preached a sermon on Mr. Gladstone's many-sided greatness and worth, when hymns suitable to the occasion were also sung. On Whit-Monday the Sunday scholars, teachers, parents, and friends had their annual outing to Mrs. Kitson's, at Burley Hill, but their pleasure was somewhat marred by the broken weather.

Manchester: Moss-side.—The annual report for 1897-98 records the eleventh anniversary of the church and the tenth of the Rev. C. Roper's ministry. There are 237 names on the roll of members, thirty-three having been added during the year, a fair proportion being young members of the congregation. Owing to deaths and removals the increase was twenty-two over the previous year. The receipts for the year, including a balance of £5 19s. brought over, amounted to £452 9s. 8d. The expenditure was £452 4s. 5d.

Manchester: Pendleton.—On Monday, May 23, a meeting was held at the Unitarian Free Church to bid farewell to the Rev. A. H. Dolphin, on his removal to Leigh. Mr. Jonathan Miller, chairman of the congregation, presided, and cordial testimony was borne to the value of Mr. Dolphin's work during his seven years' ministry at Pendleton. Among the speakers were the Revs. P. M. Higginson, W. R. Shanks, and J. G. Skemp. Presentations were made of a set of books to Mr. Dolphin from the church committee and Sunday-school and of a dinner service to Mrs. Dolphin, on behalf of the ladies' sewing society.

Pontypridd.—A memorial service was held in the new Town Hall, at the time of Mr. Gladstone's interment in Westminster Abbey, Dr. Griffiths, with other Nonconformist ministers, taking part.

Sheffield: Upporthorpe.—The Sunday-school anniversary services were held on Sunday, May 22, the preacher on the occasion being the Rev. B. C.

Constable, of Stockport. On Wednesday evening, May 25, at a general meeting of teachers, Mr. J. W. Smith, who recently resigned the secretaryship of the Sunday-school, after holding the position for ten years, was the recipient of a beautiful marble timepiece, which was presented to him by the Rev. John Ellis on behalf of the teachers, as a token of the esteem in which he is held, and in grateful recognition of his long and faithful services to the school. On Whit-Sunday afternoon the scholars joined those of the Upper and Rotherham Sunday-schools in a united gathering at the Upper Chapel. About 400 scholars were present, and a goodly number of parents and friends. Special hymns were sung. The devotional part of the service was conducted by the Rev. W. Stephens, of Rotherham, and the Rev. John Ellis delivered the address. On Whit-Monday the scholars were taken in procession, led by the Upporthorpe Military Band, to Wadsley, where they spent a very happy day in the grounds of The Hirst, kindly lent to them for the occasion through the influence of Mr. H. Green, one of our superintendents.

Swinton.—Theseventy-sixth anniversary sermons were preached on May 15, morning and evening, by the Rev. C. H. Wellbeloved, of Southport. In the afternoon the Rev. P. M. Higginson, of Monton, delivered an address to scholars, teachers and parents. The collections amounted to £21 15s.

We are glad to hear that the Rev. Robert Collyer, who was to arrive in London on Friday, will preach at Highgate on Sunday evening, and that he will also preach at Essex Church on the morning of Sunday, June 12. To-morrow (Sunday) morning Professor Bracciforti, of Milan, is announced to preach at Highgate.

If a man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greater conqueror, and the greatest of all.—*Buddhist Wisdom.*

OUR CALENDAR.

SUNDAY, JUNE 5.

It is requested that notice of any alteration in the Calendar be sent to the Publisher not later than Thursday afternoon.

Bermondsey, Fort-road, Upper Grange-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. HAROLD RYLETT.
Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. HARWOOD, B.A.
Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-rd., West Croydon, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS.
Deptford, Church-street, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. A. J. MARCHANT.
Essex Church, The Mall, Notting-hill-gate, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. FRANK K. FREESTON.
Forest-gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. H. BURGESS.
Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. H. WEATHERALL, B.A.
Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15 A.M., Dr. BROOKE HERFORD, and 7 P.M., Rev. J. E. STRONGE. The Communion at close of Morning Service.
Highgate Hill, Unitarian Christian Church, 11 A.M., Prof. BRACCIFORTI, of Milan, and 7 P.M., Rev. ROBERT COLLYER, of New York.
Islington, Unity Church Upper-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. G. DAWES HICKS, M.A., Ph.D.
Kentish Town, Free Christian Church, Clarence-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. A. FARQUHARSON. Morning, "Liberated Souls." Evening, "Loyalty to Truth."
Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 A.M., Rev. J. E. STRONGE and 7 P.M., Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.
Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. C. POPE.
Little Portland-street Chapel, near Oxford-circus, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. H. RAWLINGS, M.A. Morning, "A Spiritual Battle of Hastings."
Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. CADMAN.
Peckham, Avondale-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. G. CARTER.
Richmond Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. S. FARRINGTON. 3 P.M., Service for Children.

Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. FREDERIC ALLEN. Morning, "Religion or Tradition?" Evening, "Jesus or Athanasius?"
Stepney-Green, College Chapel, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Mr. LUCKING TAYNER. Evening, "Religion at the Royal Academy, 1898."
Stoke Newington, The Green, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. WOODING, B.A.
Wandsworth, Unitarian Christian Church, East-hill, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
Wood Green, Unity Hall, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. Dr. MUMMERY.
Woolwich, Masonic Hall, Anglesey-road, Plumstead, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. L. JENKINS JONES.

PROVINCIAL.

BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. F. W. STANLEY.
BEDFORD, Library (side room), 6.30 P.M., Rev. ROWLAND HILL.
BIRMINGHAM, Church of the Messiah, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. L. P. JACKS.
BLACKPOOL, Bank-street, North Shore, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. BINNS.
BLACKPOOL, Unitarian Lay Church, Masonic Hall, Waterloo-road, South Shore, 6.30 P.M.
BOOTLE, Free Church Hall, Stanley-road, 11 A.M., Mr. LISTER, and 6.30 P.M., Rev. NEANDER ANDERTON.
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West-hill-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. C. C. COE.
BRIGHTON, Christ Church (Free Christian), New-road, North-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. A. HOOD.
BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M.
CANTERBURY, Blackfriars, 11 A.M.
DEAL and WALMER, Free Christian Church, High-st., 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. MELSON GODFREY.
DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. S. BURROWS.
EASTBOURNE, Lismore-road, Terminus-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Mr. W. H. HOWE.
GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. A. FALLOWS, M.A.
HORSHAM, Free Christian Church, Worthing-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. J. MARTEN.
LEEDS, Mill Hill, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. HARGROVE.
LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A. 3 P.M., Children's Service, Rev. J. J. WRIGHT.
LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. J. JUPP.
LIVERPOOL, Renshaw-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. Dr. KLEIN. Evening, "Religion and Poetry in Tennyson."
MANCHESTER, Sale, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. JAMES FORREST, M.A.
MANCHESTER, Strangeways, 10.30 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. JAMES FORREST, M.A.
OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30 A.M., Rev. A. N. BLATCHFORD, B.A.
PORTSMOUTH, General Baptist Chapel, St. Thomas-street, 6.45 P.M., Mr. THOMAS BOND.
PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.45 P.M., Mr. G. COSENS PRIOR.
RAMSGATE, Assembly Rooms, High street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Mr. F. HEWITT.
READING, Unitarian Free Church, London-road, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. E. A. VOYSEY.
SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. E. L. H. THOMAS, B.A.
SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. H. WELLBELOVED.
TORQUAY, Unity Hall, Lower Union-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.
TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Mechanics' Institute, Dudley-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M.
WEYMOUTH, Oddfellows' Hall, Market-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. E. C. BENNETT.
YORK, St. Saviourgate Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. BIRKS, F.R.A.S.

CAPE TOWN, Free Protestant Unitarian Church, Hout-street, 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. BALMFORTH.

ETHICAL RELIGION SOCIETY,
STEINWAY HALL, PORTMAN-SQUARE,
W.—June 5th, at 11.15, Dr. WASHINGTON SULLIVAN, "A Canonized Septic."

S O U T H E N D - O N - S E A.

RE-OPENING of the New Unitarian Chapel, at the foot of Heygate Avenue, by the Rev. R. SPEARS, will take place on SUNDAY EVENING, June 5th at 7 P.M.

RELIGIOUS CONFERENCES (under the auspices of the Central Postal Mission) are held the **FIRST SUNDAY** of every month, at 5 o'clock, at **COLLEGE CHAPEL**, Stepney Green, E.
June 5th.—"The Creeds and Councils of Early Christendom." All are welcome.

BIRTHS.

HOLLINS—On May 28th, at Bramall Grange, Stockport, the wife of Sydney Hollins, of twins (boys).

MARRIAGES.

HOPPS—**SMITHELLS**—On the 1st inst., at the Presbyterian Chapel, Rivington, by the Rev. J. Page Hopps, J. Alfred Hopps, Leicester, to Mary, daughter of the late James Smithells, of Rivington, Lancashire.

TOWNLEY—**EDWARDS**—On June 1, at Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood, near Birmingham, by the Rev. George Heavyside, B.A., F.R.C.S., Edward Ellis, elder son of Edward Townley, of Moseley, to Florence Mary, elder daughter of Hugh Hughes Edwards, of Kings Norton.

DEATHS.

DUNCAN—On May 25th, at Norbreck, Poulton le Fylde, Isabel, younger daughter of William and Lucy Duncan, of Crumpsall, Manchester, aged 7 years.

HUTTON—On May 29th, at Wyckham, Dundrum, co. Dublin, Margaret, beloved wife of Lucius O. Hutton, J.P.

MATTHEWS—On the 20th ult., at East-street, Bridport, William Laugher Matthews, aged 61.

SHAKESPEARE—On May 28th, at Weymouth, Dorsetshire, of creeping paralysis, Frederick Henry Shakespeare, second son of the late William Shakespeare, of Stockwell, Surrey, and Austin Friars.

SUTTILL—On May 28th, at Bridport, Dorset, John Pickard Suttill, aged 70 years.

"THE INQUIRER" CALENDAR.

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The **ANNUAL MEETING** will be held at **HEYWOOD**, on **THURSDAY**, June 16th. Service in Britain Hill Chapel at 11 o'clock. Preacher, the Rev. L. DE BEAUMONT KLEIN, D.Sc., F.L.S.

BUSINESS MEETING at 2, the Rev. P. M. HIGGINSON, M.A., in the Chair. Evening Meeting at 6.30. Chairman, his Worship the **MAYOR** of HEYWOOD. Speakers, Revs. W. Harris, M.A., C. Roper, B.A., and Mr. Richard D. Holt.

Lunch and Tea will be provided as usual.

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Collections in aid of the Building Fund for New Annexe.

SAMUEL JONES'S FUND.

The Managers will meet in **OCTOBER NEXT** for the purpose of making Grants.

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The **ANNUAL MEETING** will be held on **MONDAY, JUNE 6th**, at **UNIVERSITY HALL**, (Dr. Williams' Library), Gordon-square, W.C., at 5 P.M. precisely.

The Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE, M.L.S.B., has kindly consented to preside.

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Names to be sent to the Principal not later than June 15th.

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